

# **A CASE STUDY OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF A WORKPLACE CLOSURE FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT**

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In this thesis, I report my findings in relation to the implications of a Workplace Closure Decision (WCD) for employment relationships. I adopt the Psychological Contract (PC) as a framework through which to analyse employment relationships and conduct an in-depth case study of an animal research laboratory (hereafter referred to as Tox Lab) that announced its intention to close in September 2006. Tox Lab was a subsidiary of a global agrichemical company (hereafter referred to as AgCo). As a former HR practitioner at Tox Lab, I observed and subsequently undertook preliminary research that indicated that the detrimental implications of the WCD were limited. This was surprising and contrary to the extant literature which suggests that a WCD will be perceived to be a Breach of the PC (PCB) which is likely to be interpreted as a Violation of the PC (PCV) with detrimental implications for the state and outcomes of the PC due to the norm of reciprocity.

I argued that the dominant conceptualisation of the PC as a single PC at the level of the individual was inappropriate for this case study due to the dominant role played by management in the context of a workplace closure and because the WCD constructed a division between the on-going organisation (AgCo) and the closing subsidiary workplace (Tox Lab). My proposal was that a broader conceptualisation of the PC at the level of the relationship between the organisation(s) and its employees with the possibility of multiple PCs was more appropriate for this case study. I conducted interviews with senior managers and employees in order to understand and explain their interpretations of the WCD and their perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the state and outcomes of the PC. I found that the implications of a WCD for the PC were complex and departed from PC theory because they were not necessarily entirely detrimental. My overall contribution is a framework for analysing the implications of a PCB for the PC which extends the existing theory by integrating the development and possible implications of PCV across multiple PCs from multiple perspectives.

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'Sample Individuals Pack Immediate Pension', 2006

Consultation Script, 2006

Age Discrimination Letter, 2006

Tox Lab External Training Support Request Form / Equipment Request Form, 2006

## ABBREVIATIONS

HRM	Human Resource Management
PC	Psychological Contract

PCB	Psychological Contract Breach
PCV	Psychological Contract Violation
SR	Social Responsible
WC	Workplace Closure
WCD	Workplace Closure Decision
WCP	Workplace Closure Process

### **1.1. Introduction**

In this thesis, I investigate the implications of a Workplace Closure Decision (WCD) for the Psychological Contract (PC). The organisational context for my thesis was an animal research laboratory (hereafter referred to as Tox Lab) which became part of a global agrichemical company (hereafter referred to as AgCo) in 2000 as the result of a merger. Tox Lab had a long history as an internationally renowned centre of scientific excellence which undertook scientific studies to test the human safety of AgCo's products. The scientific testing process included the use of laboratory animals which is both contentious and controversial within the UK. The composition of the Tox Lab workforce was diverse, ranging from highly educated scientists with international reputations to low skilled technicians. However, this was a very stable workforce, characterised by long service, due in part to the highly competitive terms and conditions of service available to all employees. Tox Lab was situated in the North-West of the UK on the grounds of a global competitor, from whom it had leased its premises until 2015. The duration of the lease until 2015 was common knowledge amongst the Tox Lab employees and there was a consensus amongst the workforce that the future of Tox Lab was secure until 2015 but uncertain thereafter. From 2001 – August 2008, I was the HR Business Partner at Tox Lab. I secured access to Tox Lab in order to collect data for this thesis after I had left Tox Lab and commenced an academic career.

In September 2006, it was announced that Tox Lab would commence a three year phased Workplace Closure Process (WCP). The WCD was particularly contentious and risky due to the workplace context of animal research and due to the timing of the announcement of the WCD which was nine years prior to the expiry of the lease. My observations during the WCP and the preliminary research I undertook towards the end of the WCP both suggested that despite these high risks, the detrimental implications of the WCD for the employment relationship at Tox Lab were surprisingly limited. My aim was to understand and explain the surprisingly limited detrimental implications of the WCD for the PC during a WCP.

My thesis explores the employment relationship through the lens of the PC. For the purposes of my thesis, the PC is defined as “the perceptions of both parties to the employment relationship – organisation and individual – of the reciprocal promises and obligations implied in that relationship” (Guest and Conway, 2002: 22). The PC is a well established framework for analysing the implications of organisational change such as downsizing (Conway and Briner: 2009; Feldheim: 2007). As discussed within the Literature Review, the dominant conceptualisation of the PC is at the level of the individual. In contrast, my thesis is underpinned by a conceptualisation of the PC at the level of the relationship between the organisation (as represented by senior management) and its employees. I argue that this conceptualisation is more appropriate within the context of a WCP where senior management play a key role in making and implementing decisions which are experienced by employees. This suggests to me that the parties to the PC may have different perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC, hence why I have separated the groups in the following Research Aim:

*To understand and explain the implications of the WCD for the PC during a WCP from the perspectives of management and employees.*

PC theory suggests that a WCD will be interpreted as a violation of job security obligations and therefore a violation of the PC with entirely detrimental implications for employee attitudes and behaviours (Datta *et al*: 2010; Bligh and Carsten: 2005; Turnley and Feldman: 1998; Morrison and Robinson: 1997; Rousseau: 1995; Rousseau and Aquino: 1993). However, the case of Tox Lab departs from this PC theory due to its findings that the implications of the WCD for the PC are complex and that, contrary to PC theory, they are not necessarily entirely detrimental. This suggests a need for alternative casing of the implications of a WCD for the PC. Based on PC theory, this thesis should have been a straightforward case of the violation and terminal decline of the PC. Instead, it is proposed that this Tox Lab case study was more complex and remarkable due to the unpredictable implications of the WCD for the PC.

Unfortunately, the extant literature does not reflect this complexity and possibility of surprising findings which is a deficiency that would benefit from being addressed. As I discuss in Chapter 3, the literature is dominated by the Rousseau-inspired (1990) conceptualisation of a single PC at the level of the individual which is inappropriate for this Tox Lab study for four main reasons. First, this conceptualisation implies that employees are the sole participants in the WC context and that if we are seeking to understand the implications of the WCD for the PC, then we can access this through the employee perspective. However, this ignores the dominant role of management as organisational agents of the WCD and the PC during the WCP (Gall: 2011; Cullinane and Dundon: 2011; and Sisson: 2010). This is an unfortunate oversight because it squanders an opportunity to gain multiple perspectives from employees and management as organisational agents. Whilst there are concerns about drawing upon management as organisational proxies due to their dual roles as organisational agents and employees, it is contended that at Tox Lab, management participated in their role as organisational agents. That was how they perceived themselves and how they were perceived by others. In the context of a WCD, it is plausible that these parties will have different perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC which may enhance our scope to explain surprising findings.

Second, the Rousseau-inspired (1990) conceptualisation assumes that employees perceive a single PC with an organisation. However, this assumption is inappropriate at Tox Lab because the WCD constructed distinct organisations comprising of AgCo as the ongoing organisation and Tox Lab as a closing workplace. This implies to me that employees could perceive PCs with AgCo and Tox Lab and highlights the possibility of multiple rather than single PCs (Marks: 2001). This suggests to me a broader conceptualisation than the dominant Rousseau-inspired conceptualisation (1990).

Third, this conceptualisation suggests that the employee and their perceptions are the only input into the PC. This risks ignoring the influence of broader contexts in shaping the PC. In Chapter 2, I argue that the external, organisational, policy and individual contexts shaped the state and outcomes of the PC during the WCP (Cassar and Briner: 2009; Atkinson: 2008; Guest: 2004). As such, consideration of

these contexts is vital for attempts to explain the surprisingly limited detrimental implications of the WCD for the PC at Tox Lab. In the case of Tox Lab, I propose that the organisational context of animal research had a strong influence on the state and outcomes of the PC during the WCP but that this contextualisation of the PC could be overlooked through the dominant conceptualisation. Therefore, my argument is that in the case of Tox Lab, the PC needs to be conceptualised as multiple PCs at the level of the relationships between organisational agents and employees which are embedded within internal and external contexts.

Whilst the seminal contribution of Rousseau (1990) is acknowledged, it is argued that the dominant Rousseau-inspired conceptualisation of the PC has hindered the development of theory relating to Psychological Contract Breach (PCB) and Psychological Contract Violation (PCV). Whilst Robinson and Morrison's (1997) theoretical framework makes an important distinction between the concepts of PCB and PCV and contributes a model explaining the development of PCV, this model adopts the Rousseau's (1990) conceptualisation of the PC and is based entirely on the employee perspective. This provides the model with coherence, but as Robinson and Morrison (1997: 249) acknowledge, "agents of the organisation will have their own interpretation of the situation, which we have not addressed ... The notions of contract breach and violation may even take on very different meanings when viewed from the perspective of organizational agents". When Robinson and Morrison's (1997) model is applied to Tox Lab, it is plausible that employees will interpret the WCD as a PCV and that is indeed consistent with PC theory (Datta *et al*: 2010; Bligh and Carsten: 2005; Turnley and Feldman: 1998; Morrison and Robinson: 1997; Rousseau: 1995; Rousseau and Aquino: 1993). If this is the only perspective that is considered, then it is hardly surprising that conventional wisdom suggests that the implications of WCD for the PC will be entirely detrimental. Management, as agents of the WCD and the PC, may well have a different interpretation which may not necessarily be as palatable as that of employees, but surely should not be ignored on that basis.

Moreover, Robinson and Morrison's (1997) model is focused on the development of PCV and provides insights into how PCV can be prevented from developing. However, this has limitations in the case of Tox Lab which seeks to understand

and explain the implications of a possible PCB or PCV. Whilst Robinson and Morrison (1997) allude to the potential implications of PCB and PCV, these are not incorporated into their model which means that it is ill equipped to explain the surprisingly limited detrimental implications of the WCD for the PC at Tox Lab. I argue that there is scope to extend Robinson and Morrison's (1997) model in order to integrate the development and implications of PCB and PCV and thus enhance the evaluative potential of the model.

As I discuss in Chapter 4, the research has been carefully designed around surprising empirical observations and preliminary findings which suggested that, contrary to PC theory, the implications of a WCD for the PC were not entirely detrimental at Tox Lab. The research has been designed to investigate this surprise by drawing upon the Alvesson and Sandberg's (2011) problematizing approach which challenges the assumption that the implications of the WCD will be entirely detrimental for the PC. The research design is underpinned by an interpretative paradigm which is consistent with the broader conceptualisation of the PC beyond the level of the employee. In contrast to the conceptualisation of the PC at the level of the individual, this thesis is interested in investigating multiple interpretations of the implications of the WCD for the PC from the perspectives of both employees and management as organisational agents. This interest in multiple interpretations and perspectives is reflected in the Research Objectives (ROs) which are outlined below:

- To understand and explain how Tox Lab management and employees interpreted the WCD, for example, as a breach of the PC (PCB) and / or violation of the PC (PCV);
- To critically analyse management and employee perspectives on the state of the PC during a WCP, particularly in the light of any perceptions of PCB and interpretations of PCV; and
- To evaluate management and employee perspectives on the outcomes of the PC during a WCP.

The Research Aim and Objectives have been addressed principally through the collection of data from semi-structured interviews with managers who regarded themselves and were regarded by others as agents of the WCD and the PC, and with Tox Lab employees. The interviews were conducted on a one to one basis due to the emotional nature of WC and the desire for flexibility to have in-depth discussions about the surprising observations and preliminary empirical findings according to the perspectives and interests of different participants. However, in accordance with a localist perspective on research interviews, the accounts are regarded as interesting interpretations of the implications of a WCD for the PC, rather than the objective truth. Furthermore, consistent with a localist perspective, it is argued that research interviews are accounts situated within contexts which need to be understood in order to enhance interpretations. This supports the argument for a greater contextualisation of the PC and is enabled in this study by the researcher's familiarity with Tox Lab as a former employee. An abductive approach to data analysis has been used to move backwards and forwards between the literature, data and analysis in order to understand and explain the surprise and contribute alternative casing of the implications of a WCD for the PC. Despite the robust research design, it is acknowledged that the research design has limitations. These limitations arise from the use of a single case study, the cross-sectional research design and the composition of the sample (older workers, highly paid with long service and professional qualifications). However, it is contended that all reasonable steps have been taken to construct high quality research which contributes credible and interesting findings.

The findings of this thesis are presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 with the findings in relation to each of the three Research Objectives presented in a separate chapter. Chapter 5 presents the findings from all the different groups of interviewees that the WCD was perceived to be a PCB and for all but the group of AgCo agents, the PCB was interpreted as a PCV due to attribution and injustice perceptions. Chapter 6 presents the evaluation of the AgCo agents (supported by the Career Change Consultants or CCCs) about the surprisingly positive state of the PC during the WCP compared with a more mixed and complex evaluation from the agents of Tox Lab and the employees due to the interesting perception of dual PCs. Chapter 7 presents the findings about the outcomes of the PC during the WCP, including a positive perspective from AgCo agents and CCCs compared with a more mixed



perspective from Tox Lab agents and employees due to the operation of PCV across dual PCs.

Interestingly, there was evidence of divided perspectives amongst management. Common perspectives are evident amongst management who were agents of the WCD and the AgCo PC and survived the WCD and are referred to as agents of AgCo, compared with management who were agents of the Tox Lab PC and left Tox Lab at the end of the WCP. The AgCo agents presented an entirely favourable endorsement of the WCD and the WCP whereas the agents of the Tox Lab PC held a more critical view of the WCD but a more favourable perspective on the WCP which was consistent with perspective of employees. Notwithstanding the less favourable perspectives, principally related to the WCD, the overall evaluations of the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP are surprisingly favourable and depart from the literature which depicts the implications as entirely negative.

The perspectives of management and employees are compared and contrasted in Chapter 8. It is proposed that the entirely favourable perspective of the agents of the WCD and the AgCo PC is consistent with their role in communicating and defending a deeply unpopular WCD. The positive perspective of the CCCs is sensitive to their role as third party redeployment consultants engaged by the organisation to support the WCP. The more mixed perspective of agents of Tox Lab is consistent with their role in having to accept a WCD into which they had limited input compared with defending their treatment of employees during the WCP. The less favourable perspective of employees is consistent with their role as recipients of an unexpected and generally unwanted WCD. This highlights the need to situate the perspectives of the parties within their political contexts, thereby strengthening the case for a contextualised analysis of the PC at Tox Lab. Notwithstanding the differences in perspectives within management and between management and employees, this thesis discusses how the perspectives of both parties depart from the literature which depicts detrimental implications.

My conclusion is that PC theory over-simplifies the possible implications of a WCD for the PC due to its conceptualisation of a single PC at the level of the employee and an assumption that a WCD will be interpreted as a PCV with entirely detrimental implications for the state and outcomes of the PC. In this thesis, I draw upon less dominant but more relevant conceptualisations of the PC which are broader and more contextualised. I found that, at Tox Lab, the perspectives of the parties on the implications of the WCD for the PC was transcended by leaver or survivor status rather than position within the organisational hierarchy as management or employee. My contribution is an alternative casing of the implications of the WCD for the PC at Tox Lab which departs from PC theory in suggesting that the development of PCV is complex due to the importance of justice perceptions, the influence of moderators and norms, and the operation of PCV across multiple PCs. My overall contribution is a model which extends Morrison and Robinson's (1997) theoretical framework on the development of PCV to incorporate the possibility of multiple interpretations, multiple perspectives and multiple PCs. In addition to this theoretical contribution, this thesis contributes empirical data on the implications of PCV across multiple PCs, on the over-fulfilment of obligations and on under-researched contexts of WC and an animal research laboratory. Moreover, it responds to criticisms about the over-reliance of PC research on quantitative approaches by constructing a qualitative methodological framework for investigating surprising phenomena. In relation to the implications for HRM policy and practice, I argue that this case study highlights the merits of strategic investment in justice perceptions and the benefits of a Social Responsible (SR) approach to a WCP which is contrary to the literature which depicts managers' preferred approach as non-SR.

The structure of this thesis is as follows. Chapter 2 contextualises this thesis by presenting an overview of the contexts of Tox Lab, WC and animal research. Chapter 3 provides a critical review of the extant literature on the PC and the contexts of WC and animal research, whilst Chapter 4 outlines the research design. The findings in relation to Research Objective (1) are presented in Chapter 5, with the findings in relation to Research Objective (2) presented in Chapter 6 and the findings in relation to Research Objective (3) presented in Chapter 7. These findings are compared and contrasted in Chapter 8 and discussed in relation

to the literature. The thesis ends with conclusions, implications for policy and practice, limitations and ideas for further research in Chapter 9.

## Chapter 2. Case study context

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### **2.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the contexts for this case study. The relevance of contexts for the PC is highlighted by Guest (2004: 548) who argues

that “the wider context and, within the organisation, the more relevant policy aspects need to form part of the analysis of the input to and influence on the exchange relationship and responses to it”. Following Guest (2004), I discuss the external, organisational and policy contexts for the PC during the WCP at Tox Lab. My argument is that the external, individual, organisational and policy contexts are relevant to the Research Aim of understanding and explaining the surprising limited detrimental implications of the WCD on the PC and therefore merit integration into Robinson and Morrison’s (1997) model.

Conway and Briner (2009: 72) comment that “the psychological contract can be useful for understanding how macro and micro changes to the employment relationship affect employees’ experience of work”. Contemporary research has investigated the impact of various types of organisational changes on employee attitudes and behaviours including downsizing, restructuring and layoffs (Parzefall: 2012; Hubbard and Purcell: 2001; Pate *et al*: 2000; Turnley and Feldman: 1998; Rousseau and Anton: 1991; Rousseau and Anton: 1988), mergers (Bligh and Carsten: 2005; Shield *et al*: 2002) and transitioning to homeworking (Tietze and Nadin, 2011; Collins, Cartwright and Hislop, 2012). Therefore, the application of the PC to the WC context at Tox Lab is consistent with the contemporary application of the construct.

In view of the application of the PC to the change context, it is surprising that contextually-based analysis of the PC construct is limited. As Cassar and Briner (2009: 677) note, “Most approaches to this concept ignore the role of context in shaping its features”. Where the PC construct is contextualised, it tends to compare the application of the PC construct across cultural contexts (Sparrow: 1996; Rousseau and Schalk: 2000; Edwards *et al*: 2003; Cassar and Briner: 2009). Whilst these macro and comparative contexts are relevant and interesting, there is a lack of attention paid towards the more immediate micro context with its unique features, which, in the case of Tox Lab, I suggest can influence perceptions of the state and outcomes of the PC. Chaudhry and Song’s (2014) study exemplifies the disconnect between the application of the PC to the context of organisational change and the methodological disregard for context. Chaudhry and Song (2014) purport to investigate PC in the context of organisational change but only explain

the nature of the change event very briefly as part of the discussion of Methods. As discussed within the Research Methods Chapter, it suggested that the dominant methodology of quantitative research contributes to this decontextualised analysis of the PC. However, following Guest (2004: 548), I propose that “Greater consideration of these [contextual] issues would facilitate the analysis of the employment relationship and also greatly enrich research on psychological contracts in general”.

This Tox Lab study investigates the PC in the specific contexts of a WC in a Industrial Toxicology Laboratory. It is proposed that the “context helps not only to shape the content of the exchange that forms the psychological contract but also the responses to it” (Guest, 2004:549). It is suggested that the contexts of both WC and toxicology have distinctive features which are interesting and important but pose challenges to researchers seeking to gain knowledge of these contexts. A distinctive feature of the Industrial Toxicology context, for example, is its use of animals for scientific research purposes. This provokes strong emotions within the UK from activists who oppose the animal for scientific research purposes and use various mechanisms to voice their concerns. This has led to animal research laboratories adopting a low profile within the UK and being described as “hidden institutions” (Holmberg and Ideland, 2012: 356). Such laboratories are wary of welcoming unknown researchers into their facilities due to safety concerns for their workers, animals and scientific studies. Similarly under-researched, a study of WC and ultimate organisational death presents a distinctive perspective on the organisational and employment life cycle in comparison with the dominant organisational paradigm of growth, but one which an organisation may be unwilling to share with researchers due to time constraints and an aversion to observation during decline (Whetten: 1980). Consequently, the empirical application of the PC framework to the contexts of WC in an animal research laboratory is a gap in the literature to which this study will make a contribution.

I argue that the distinctive but under-researched features of the industrial and organisational contexts of Tox Lab shape the state and outcomes of the PC. The Financial Executive Research Foundation (1986: xii) reported that ‘There are no easy solutions to the problems involved in a plant closing. No matter how it is

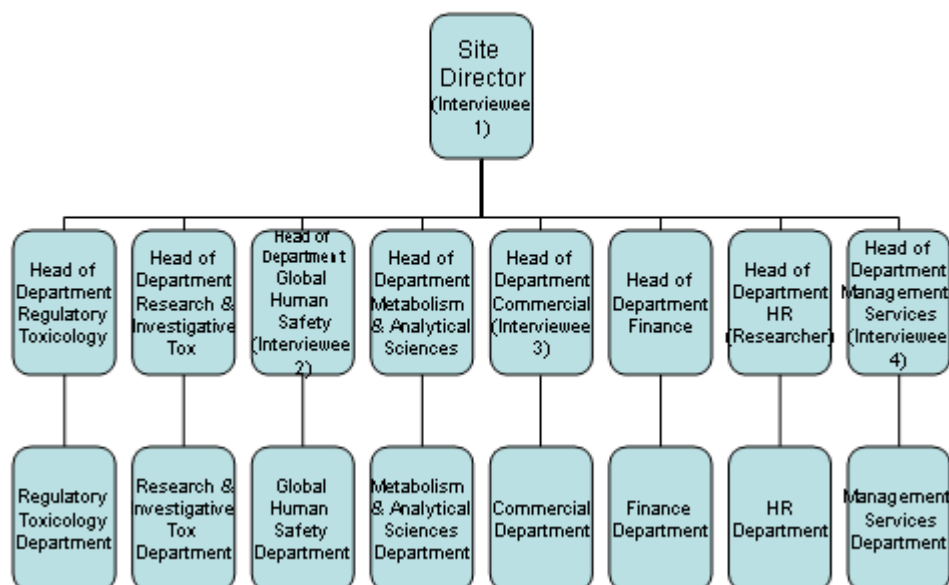
handled, there will likely be some adverse effects on the company closing the facility and its employees”. I contend that a toxicology laboratory is a particularly problematic context for WC because of the laboratory animals and the risks of particular attention from animal activists. This suggests to me that the distinctive features of a WCP in an animal research laboratory may not be amenable to generalisation. Furthermore, it is proposed that “the terms of psychological contracts are defined with respect to the local context, as part of an unfolding relationship” (Conway and Briner, 2009: 88). This implies to me that a case study is an appropriate research strategy for an in-depth investigation of these under-researched and distinctive contexts.

## **2.2 Overview of the organisational context**

Tox Lab was formed in 1963 and until it closed in April 2010, Tox Lab provided expert toxicology knowledge and data on the health and safety of products to AgCo, its legacy companies, external clients and the broader toxicology community. In 2000, Tox Lab became a subsidiary of AgCo which was formed from a merger between two global agrichemical companies in 2000. AgCo continues to operate and currently employs approximately 28,000 people in over 90 countries across the globe with six sites across various locations in the United Kingdom. At the point of the announcement of the WCD in 2006, there were approximately 300 permanent employees at Tox Lab as well as approximately 50 temporary workers. Tox Lab conducted the majority of its work for AgCo but was also engaged in third party work for external clients in order to generate income.

Tox Lab had its own self-contained management structure as outlined in Figure 2.1 below:

## Tox Lab Management Structure



*Figure 2.1: Tox Lab Management Structure*

Tox Lab had a Senior Management Team which comprised of all the Heads of Department who reported in to the Site Director. The Site Director of Tox Lab was part of the AgCo leadership team and managed the interface between AgCo and Tox Lab. As indicated in Figure 2.1 and discussed further in Chapter 4, four members of the Tox Lab Senior Management Team were included in the sample for this study.

Tox Lab occupied the same facility on the site of a global pharmaceutical company in the north west of the UK prior to its closure in 2010. Tox Lab leased its laboratory from this pharmaceutical organisation for a notional rent of £1 per annum. The merger from which AgCo was formed in 2000 prompted a re-negotiation of the lease for a fixed term period of 15 years. The outcome of the re-negotiation of the lease was communicated to the workforce in 2000 meaning that it was common knowledge amongst staff that the lease would expire in 2015. It is plausible that employees would interpret the fixed-term duration of the lease as a promise of job security until 2015. The announcement of the WCD in 2010 was five years before the expiry of the lease and the timing was premature relative to the duration of the lease. This suggests to me that the timing of the WCD in relation to the lease is an

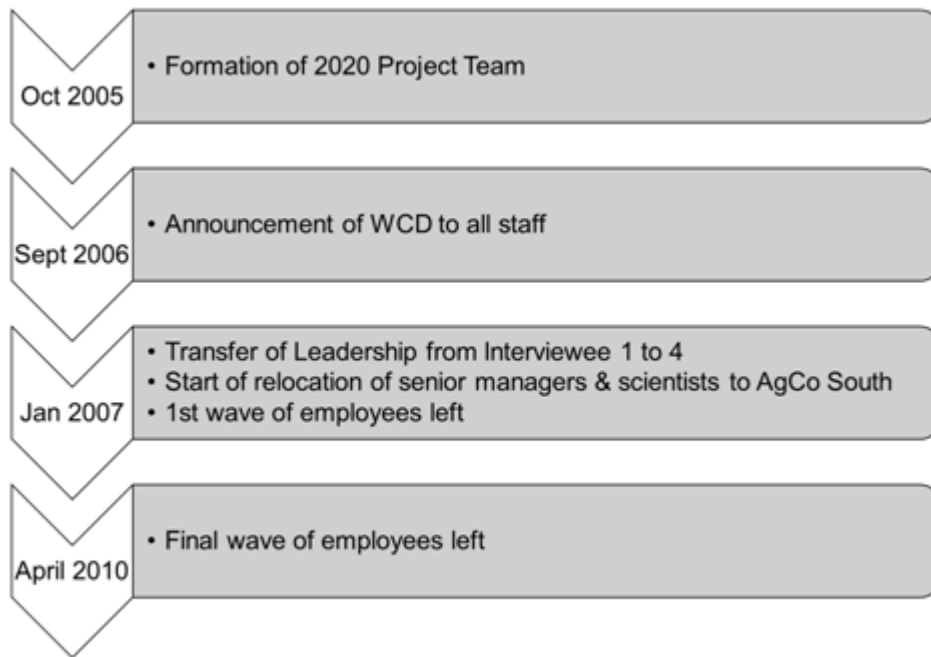
influencing contextual factor which shapes perspectives on the state and outcomes of the PC during the WCP.

#### 2.2.1 Project 2020: Global re-structuring project

The WC decision-making process commenced in autumn 2005 when Tox Lab was incorporated into a global review of Research and Development initiated and led by AgCo senior leaders. This review was referred to as Project 2020. As Director of Tox Lab, Interviewee 1 led the Tox Lab involvement in Project 2020 and was supported by Interviewees 2 and 3 who were members of the Project 2020 team (please refer to Figure 2.1 for an illustration of their position of Interviewees 1-3 in the Tox Lab management structure). The outcome of the review for Tox Lab was the WCD and the outsourcing of toxicology services to third party providers. This outcome was communicated to the Tox Lab workforce on 14 September 2006 by Interviewee 1 as part of a global communication of a revised R&D strategy which meant redundancies and downsizing at a number of AgCo workplaces. However, the impact of Project 2020 was more drastic for Tox Lab in comparison with other AgCo workplaces because Tox Lab was the only workplace which was closed as a result of Project 2020. It is plausible to me that the drastic implications of Project 2020 for Tox Lab in comparison with other AgCo workplaces, could be a contextual factor which influences perspectives on the state and outcomes of the PC during the WCP.

The WCD which was announced at Tox Lab in September 2006 marked the formal start of the WCP which lasted for just under four years. A timeline illustrating key milestones in the WCP is presented in Figure 2.2 below:





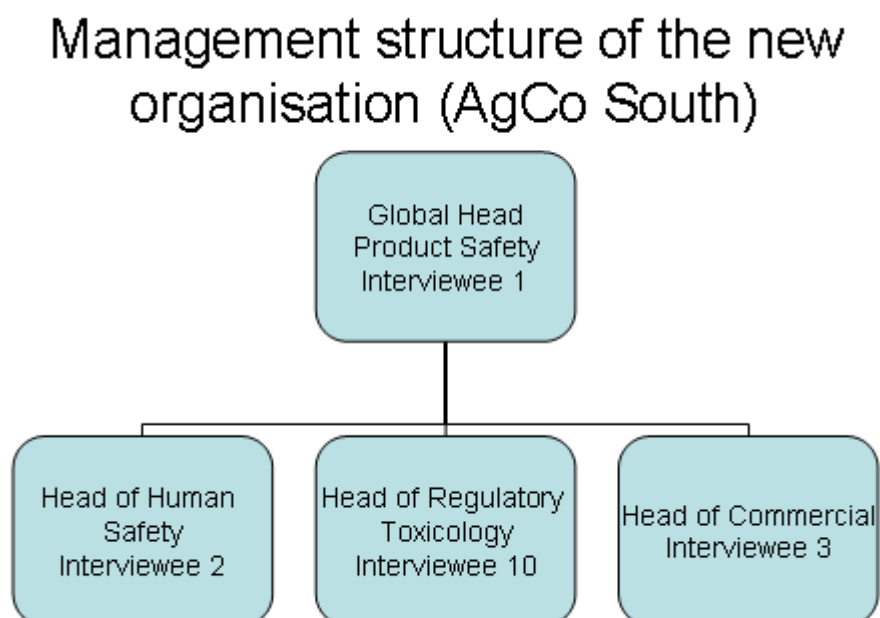
*Figure 2.2: Timeline of the WCP*

Figure 2.2 illustrates that the WC decision-making process began informally amongst a select project team (which included Interviewees 1-3) about a year before the formal announcement of the WCD. The formation of a project team to discuss this over a 10 month period suggests that this was a substantive decision which was considered and discussed by a group of people prior to the announcement. Figure 2.2 indicates that there was a 4 month period from the point of announcement to the first tangible signs of WC. These signs involved the transfer of leadership from Interviewee 1 to Interviewee 4, the relocation of senior managers and scientists and the first wave of redundancies. These redundancies continued in waves from January 2007 until April 2010. As illustrated in Figure 2.2, the duration of the WCP was just under four years. This is consistent with Hansson and Wigblad's (2006) categorisation of a WCP lasting for over 12 months as a long-term WCP.

### 2.2.2 New organisation: Surviving employees

AgCo had an ongoing need for toxicology provision to ensure the safety of its products and an outcome of the Project 2020 review was to outsource toxicology provision to third party providers. A new organisation was set up at AgCo South

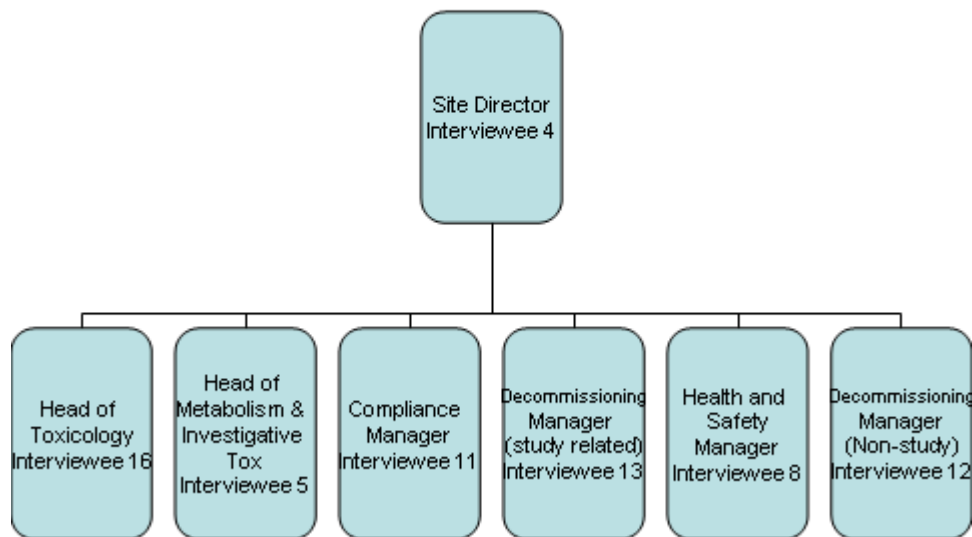
which comprised of approximately thirty technical specialists who managed the interface with the outsource providers, interpreted the toxicology study findings and prepared the relevant reports for regulatory bodies. The management structure of the new organisation is presented in Figure 2.3 below:



*Figure 2.3: AgCo South Management Structure*

As depicted in Figure 2.3, the new organisation (AgCo South) was led by Interviewee 1 whilst Interviewees 2 and 3 were part of his management team, along with a senior scientist (Interviewee 10) who relocated from Tox Lab. Interviewee 1 communicated that he and Interviewees 2 and 3 would be relocating to AgCo South when he announced the WCD on 16 September 2006 and informed the workforce that Interviewee 4 would replace him as the Director of Tox Lab during the WCP. This relocation of senior managers necessitated the construction of a transitional management team for the WCP, led by Interviewee 4 and supported by a team of managers who had not previously been part of the management team. They were responsible for closing the workplace and were all in the same redundant position at various points during the WCP. The structure of the transitional management team at Tox Lab during the WCP is presented in Figure 2.4 below:

## Transitional management structure of Tox Lab during the WCP



*Figure 2.4: Tox Lab transitional management team structure during the WCP*

Figure 2.4 highlights that a transitional management team was constructed at Tox Lab during the WCP. When compared to Figures 2.1 and 2.3, it is apparent that the majority of the senior managers survived the WCD and relocated to senior management roles within the new organisation at AgCo South. Some of the remaining employees who remained at Tox Lab, including those referred to in Figure 2.4, were promoted into bigger roles that they had previously but were leavers at the end of the WCP. This suggests that the WCD constructed two distinct groups comprising of survivors who relocated to AgCo South as depicted in Figure 2.3 and leavers as depicted in Figure 2.4. The characteristics of both groups are discussed further as part of the Sampling section within Chapter 4 Methodology.

Interviewee 2 was responsible for resourcing the new organisation and negotiated with technical specialists from Tox Lab about them relocating to AgCo South during the WCP. The new organisation could have been perceived as suitable alternative employment for Tox Lab employees, providing employees with an opportunity to

continue their employment with AgCo and their employment relationships with Tox Lab colleagues and presenting them with a new career opportunity. However, roles within the new organisation were initially limited to thirty employees with a high level of scientific expertise and they required employees to relocate from the north west to the south east of England. This meant that there were barriers to the majority of Tox Lab employees surviving the WC by securing these roles within the new organisation. It is plausible to me that employees could perceive that access to alternative employment in the new organisation was restricted to an elite group of senior managers. This suggests to me that the construction of a new organisation could be an influencing contextual factor on perspectives on the state and outcomes of the PC during the WCP.

### 2.2.3 WC HRM policy framework:

In the team meetings which occurred in the days after the announcement of the WCD, a bundle of HRM policies and practices were communicated to employees as the WC deal. The bundle related to the following HRM policies and practices which governed the employment relationship during the WCP and are akin to what is described in the literature as a Socially Responsible (SR) approach to WC (Hansson and Wigblad, 2006):

- Job security;
- Consultation mechanisms;
- Notice periods;
- Redeployment support;
- Severance payment;
- Pension benefits;
- Training funds; and
- Annual salary review and bonus payments.

The elements of the SR approach listed above constructed the HRM policy context for the WCP and my suggestion is that they shaped perspectives on the state and outcomes of the PC during the WCP. I elaborate upon each element of the SR approach in the following sections.

#### 2.2.4 Job security policy: Promise of long-term employment

The AgCo UK Security of Employment Policy stated that “it is recognised that it would be impossible for the company to provide a guarantee in relation to life time employment ... it seeks to provide secure long-term employment for all staff who maintain a satisfactory record of performance” (AgCo UK Human Resources Policy ‘UK Security of Employment Policy’: 2003:1). This HRM policy suggests that the organisation promised its employees long-term job security contingent on individual performance. However, the WCD ended any prospect of long-term job security for the majority of Tox Lab employees, regardless of individual performance. The WCD seems to me to be contrary to the promises outlined in this Security of Employment Policy and it is plausible to me that this discrepancy could be a factor which influences interpretations of the WCD.

#### 2.2.5 Consultation mechanisms: Promise to fully consult

The organisation’s position on consultation is outlined in the UK Security of Employment policy in which it is stated that AgCo “is committed to fully consult with trade union representatives, employee representatives and employees as appropriate on matters affecting security of employment” (UK Human Resources Policy ‘UK Security of Employment Policy’, 2003: 1). This indicates to me that AgCo promised to involve and enable employees to participate in decision-making in the event of a redundancy situation. The application of this policy in the Tox Lab WC context entailed regular collective team briefings and three individual consultation meetings which were referred to as ‘Aspirational meetings’, all of which occurred after the announcement of the WCD.

During the aspirational individual consultation meetings, each employee was provided with a generic guidance document detailing information on next steps, benefits and redeployment support (*‘Sample Individuals Pack Immediate*

*Pension*'). During the consultation meetings, employees were encouraged to discuss their 'aspirations' for roles in the new organisation, their preferred leaving date and any future career plans. By the third meeting, the organisation promised to confirm the date when each employee's role ceased (referred to as the job stop date), the notice period and subsequent exit date, any offers of redeployment within the new organisation and quotes to illustrate severance and pension entitlements.

Managers were provided with a script outlining the content and structure for each of these three consultation meetings ('*Consultation Script*'). This three stage scripted consultation process could be perceived as providing employees with consistent and detailed information about what was happening during the WCP and to provide employees with a number of opportunities to exercise their voice and participate in decisions about the impact of the WC on their future plans. However, the scripting of the consultation meetings suggests to me that there were limits to the scope for employees to input into the decision-making procedures which could be inconsistent with promises in this policy document about consultation with employees. My suggestion is that the degree to which employees felt involved and able to participate in the WC decision-making process could be a factor which influences their perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP.

#### 2.2.6 Notice periods: 3-12 months

The UK Security of Employment Policy outlined AgCo's commitment to a minimum of 3 months' notice for all employees in the event of a redundancy situation. This minimum notice period compared favourably with the statutory minimum provisions which are a maximum of 12 weeks. At Tox Lab, some employees in management positions had contractual rights to 12 month's notice from the organisation. This policy on notice periods compares favourably with statutory minimum entitlements and could be perceived as a source of some employment security during the WCP. However, the Security of Employment policy states that employees required permission from the Company to leave prior to the end of their notice period. If the Company did not grant such permission then the policy explains that the employee would be treated as a voluntary leaver and would forfeit their severance and any

rights to unabated pension benefits. This meant that employees were tied in to long notice periods which could be perceived as a constraint on job searching activities and as prolonging the WCP. This could be perceived as unfair treatment of employees considering that the organisation has announced that their roles are surplus to requirements. It is plausible to me that the policy on notice periods could be a contextual factor which influences perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP.

**2.2.7** Redeployment support: Advice, training and support for job searching  
Redeployment support was provided by a team of external consultants who set up redeployment centre at Tox Lab after the announcement of the WCD (referred to as Career Change Centre or CCC). The purpose of the CCC was stated as the provision of “valuable advice and training, as well as a strong sense of community and mutual support” (UK Human Resources Policy ‘Resources for Career Change’, 2006: 1). All employees automatically moved into the redeployment centre for a minimum of three months once their roles had ceased (Job Stop Date). During this time, employees were paid their regular salary, had to physically attend the redeployment centre twice a week in order to undertake and discuss their job searching activities under a hot desking arrangement and were able to access the services available from the redeployment consultants. The transition from full time productive work with a designated work space and a familiar routine within a team, to what was effectively part time attendance on a hot desking basis to undertake individual job searching activities, could be perceived as a difficult transition. However, the redeployment services included coaching and training on a group and individual basis on topics such as job search strategy, dealing with change, CV writing, interview techniques, starting your own business and self-employment. Employees could book individual appointments with CC consultants and book onto scheduled training courses through the manager of the CCC (who was a Tox Lab employee). For the rest of an employee’s working time, they were expected to job search but this could be undertaken outside of Tox Lab. This range of redeployment services could be regarded as supportive to employees during their transition out of Tox Lab. Therefore, this suggests to me that the redeployment support would be a factor which influences perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP.

### 2.2.8 Severance benefits: Transitional arrangements

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (2006) or anti-age discrimination legislation was implemented in the UK on 1 October 2006, shortly after the announcement of the WCD. This legislation aimed to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of age in the methods of calculating severance benefits and in organisational retirement policies which required employees to retire before age 65. This legislation had direct implications for AgCo because its contractual severance scheme was calculated based on age, length of service and pay, and because its retirement policy included a contractual retirement age of 62. In order to comply with the legislation, AgCo introduced a new contractual redundancy scheme which removed the age-related factors and instead, calculated severance pay entitlements on the basis of length of service and also meant that the Company retirement age increased from 62 to 65 years old, thereby potentially extending the duration of employment relationships. The anti-age discrimination legislation amounted to a variation in terms and conditions of service for employees and in order to ensure legal compliance, AgCo consulted with its employees and formally wrote to each individual requesting written confirmation of their acceptance of this variation. Letters were sent to employees in August 2006, shortly before the announcement of WC on 16 September 2006. This verbal and written consultation process could be perceived as providing employees with detailed and consistent information about the implications of legal changes. However, the proximity of the legal changes to the announcement of the WCD could be regarded as the organisation behaving opportunistically in changing redundancy and retirement provisions just before a major re-structuring exercise.

Transitional arrangements were specified in the legislation for the implementation of the retirement provisions but not for the implementation of the severance payments. AgCo introduced transitional arrangements for severance payments for 3 years from 1 October 2006 which meant that if employees were made redundant during this period, they would be eligible for the greater of the payment when comparing eligibility under the new scheme with payment due at 90% of the old scheme. These legislative changes could have been welcomed by employees under the age of 41 who under the previous age-related severance pay



arrangements, would have had their severance pay calculated using a lower multiplier than an employee aged 41 and over. Even though an employee under age 41 might have had the same or longer service than an older employee, they would have been eligible for less severance pay due to their age. However, as discussed further in Chapter 4, the majority of the Tox Lab workforce were aged 40-44 at the time of the WCP. This suggests that the majority of employees faced receiving a lower severance payment than they would have received prior to 1 October 2006 due to the removal of the age-related multiplier. It is plausible to me that this legal context could be a factor which influenced perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC.

#### 2.2.9 Pension benefits: Unabated pension for age 50+

At the time of the announcement of the WCD, Tox Lab employees were either members of a final salary (defined benefit) or an investment account (defined contribution) pension scheme. Employee and Company contribution rates varied for each scheme but a typical example of the defined contribution scheme would be employees contributing 2-4% of their salary and AgCo contributing 6-8%. Both schemes included provisions for employees to make additional voluntary contributions to enhance their pension accrual. These contribution rates compare favourably to average defined contribution rates by employees of 2.7% and employers of 6.2% in the private sector (Office for National Statistics, *Pension Trends*, Chapter 8). Furthermore, employees with a defined benefit pension at Tox Lab were eligible for an immediate unabated pension if they were made redundant at age 50 and above. Given that the duration of the WCP was up to 3 years, depending on individual job stop dates, employees aged 45 years old at the time of the WC announcement, could be within sight of receiving this benefit but effectively run out of time due to their exit date. This suggests to me that eligibility for these generous pension benefits could be a factor which influences perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC.

#### 2.2.10 Training support: budget of £5,000 per employee for retraining

In the team briefings following the announcement of the WCD, employees were informed about the construction of a redeployment training fund. All employees were able to apply for financial support of up to £5,000 per person in order to

enhance their skills through training or to purchase equipment to help them to set up their own business. An application procedure was established to consider requests. Employees applied for funding using a standard application form that required them to outline what they intended to use the funds for and to illustrate how the funds would enhance their skills or support any new business ventures.

The applications were considered by a panel led by Interviewee 4 as Tox Lab Director, and feedback was provided to employees on decisions to support or reject funding applications. The formality of the procedures constructed for this process could be perceived as bureaucratic and a barrier to accessing these funds. It could be perceived that since the organisation had decided to close Tox Lab and had identified that it had these funds available, then it should distribute them equally to everyone without making people formally apply for them. As such, the procedures underpinning the allocation of training support could be regarded as inaccessible and unnecessarily stringent. However, the provision of financial support to attend external training events or purchase equipment could be perceived as further enhancement of the redeployment support and the very good treatment of employees, administered through robust procedures. Therefore, an employee's engagement with and success at applying for any redeployment funds could be a factor which influences perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP.

#### [2.2.11](#) Annual salary review and bonus payments

In the absence of any recognition of Trade Unions for collective bargaining over pay, employees' remuneration was determined by management at Tox Lab. Remuneration consisted of an annual salary and bonus payment. Salary was influenced by individual performance, AgCo's reward budget and the external market. The size of the bonus payment varied according to seniority in the organisational hierarchy and was influenced by AgCo's performance and employees' performance. Employees had an annual performance review which evaluated their performance using a forced distribution of rankings. This required management to identify 25% of Tox Lab employees as low performers, 50% as average performers and 25% as high performers. The performance ranking had a

direct impact upon both the annual salary review and the size of the annual bonus payment. Any salary increases and bonus payments were paid in April each year.

The Security of Employment Policy outlined how employees would be eligible for any salary reviews provided they were still in productive employment and not in the redeployment CCC. This policy also stated that employees would be eligible for any bonus payments until their job stopped and they moved into the redeployment CCC. On the basis of this policy, the Tox Lab employees would be excluded from salary reviews and bonus payments due to the WCD and could perceive a financial detriment. However, with the exception of the first group of leavers in January 2007, subsequent leavers retained some eligibility for annual salary reviews and bonus payments, thereby departing from the policy provisions. The exit profile indicates that the majority of Tox Lab employees left after April 2007. For the majority of Tox Lab employees therefore, the arrangements for salary and bonus payments could be regarded as more favourable than the policy provisions. It is plausible to me that the application of this policy could be a factor which influences perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP.

In summary, the HRM policy context at Tox Lab was consistent with a SR approach to a WCP. My suggestion is that this SR approach was an influencing contextual factor on perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP. Next, I discuss the external contexts which I propose were factors which influenced perspectives on the PC during the WCP.

## **2.3 External factors**

### **2.3.1 Economic conditions: Global financial crisis**

The economic conditions changed drastically over the duration of the WCP. The WCD was announced in September 2006 which was before the onset of the economic recession in late 2008 (WERS 11, 2013:6). The first redundancies from Tox Lab occurred in January 2007 and were then phased according to toxicology study requirements until the last group of leavers in April 2010. This meant that the

later leavers entered a very different labour market for their job searching activities compared with those who left in 2007. It is plausible to me that the exit date of participants in this study might be a factor which influences perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP.

Conventional wisdom suggests that in a deteriorating economic climate, redundancies, downsizing and workplace closures could be considered to be the norm rather than exceptional responses by organisations. This could legitimise the WCD, although according to WERS 11 (WERS 11, 2013: 7), the three most common responses of organisations to the recession were:

1. Pay freezes / pay cuts (action taken by 42% of all workplaces) ;
2. Recruitment freezes (action taken by 28% of all workplaces) ; and
3. Change in the organisation of work (action taken by 24% of all workplaces).

Interestingly, compulsory redundancies are listed as the ninth most common response, only taken by 14% of all workplaces. This suggests that compulsory redundancy was an atypical response to the economic conditions between 2004-2011 and that other responses were preferred by organisations.

The three most common responses of organisations to the recession identified in WERS 11 (2013) meant that the UK labour market which was not conducive to job searching in the period of the WCP from 2008 onwards. The WERS 11 data implies that there would be a lack of vacancies for redundant Tox Lab employees to apply for, high levels of competition for vacancies, limits on the ability and desire of organisations to offer competitive salaries and potentially a change in the demand for certain types of roles, perhaps due to the influence of technology (for example, rendering administrative roles obsolete). This suggests that Tox Lab employees who remained employed longer may have perceived that they were protected from the harsh labour market conditions arising from the global economic recession and had benefits arising from continued employment during the WCP. However, as the

economic conditions deteriorated during the WCP, these employees faced the prospect of tough labour market conditions which could have been a source of stress and anxiety. Therefore, my suggestion is that the economic context was a factor which influenced perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC, particularly in relation to economic context at the time when employees left Tox Lab.

### 2.3.2 Regulated industry

The conduct of animal research in the UK is regulated by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act which was revised in January 2013 and aims to safeguard the welfare of laboratory animals. The legislation means that licences are required for premises, studies and technicians before any animal research can be conducted. The Home Office is responsible for granting these licences and for inspecting licenced workplaces to ensure that they remain compliant with the required animal welfare standards. This regulatory framework means that animal welfare is of paramount concern to animal research laboratories such as Tox Lab. Failure to comply with the regulatory framework could result in the repeal of licences which could result in negative publicity, attention from animal rights activists and ultimately, the closure of animal research laboratory. In addition, regulatory authorities in the UK (and other EU member states) require that studies assessing the safety of products such as those conducted at Tox Lab, are conducted in accordance with Good Laboratory Practice (GLP). GLP is a quality management system which outlines principles for the planning, performance, monitoring, reporting and archiving of studies to ensure the quality and reliability of data assessing the risks to human safety of particular products. After an initial assessment to determine compliance with GLP requirements, Tox Lab was routinely inspected every 12 – 24 months. This regulatory regime suggests to me that there was a context of compliance at Tox Lab and it is plausible to me that this regulatory context influenced responses to and perspectives on the WCD.

In summary, I have highlighted how the external labour market conditions and regulatory context could be factors which influenced perspectives on the PC during the WCP.

## **2.4 Individual variables**

### **2.4.1 Age:**

At the start of the WCP, the majority of employees at Tox Lab were aged 40-44, followed closely by 55-65 years old. As discussed in relation to the HRM policy framework, employees aged 50 and above were eligible for early retirement with unabated pension benefits when they left the organisation for reason of redundancy. Approximately one third of EEs were over the age of 50 at the time of the WCP and eligible for an unabated pension due to the WC decision. For employees aged 50 and above, age could be regarded as a source of financial security by providing access to severance payment and unabated pension benefits. This could have favourable implications for their responses to the WCD. However, since the majority of the workforce were not eligible for early retirement with unabated pension benefits, they may hold less favourable perceptions of age. The majority of employees would be entering the labour market to search for alternative employment and could perceive their age as a barrier to accessing the financial security available through the pension arrangements to colleagues age 50 and above. In comparison to their more mature colleagues, these workers could perceive that they have fared less well in terms of the outcomes of the WCP due to their age which could have detrimental implications for their reactions to the WC decision. Therefore, my suggestion is that age was a factor which influenced perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP.

### **2.4.2 Long service:**

The length of service of employees at Tox Lab ranged from 0 to 45 years. The Tox Lab Service Profile indicates that approximately 60% of the workforce had more than 10 year's employment. This suggests to me that employment relationships were characterised by long service prior to the WCP. However, employees with long service may have developed emotional attachment to Tox Lab, particularly if they have spent the majority of the careers with the same organisation. Such emotional attachment to Tox Lab could be a factor which influences the intensity of responses to the WCD. Furthermore, some employees may have limited experience of employment outside of Tox Lab and may not have been active in the

labour market for a number of years. Long service could be regarded as a hindrance to attempts by redundant employees to secure alternative employment, especially if they have developed specific skills for Tox Lab which might not be particularly transferable. This could be a source of anxiety for long serving employees who needed to find employment after redundancy from Tox Lab and therefore be a factor which influenced perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP.

#### 2.4.3 Salary:

At the time of the WCD, the salaries of employees at Tox Lab ranged from c£11k to c£106k per annum. The average annual salary of the sample for this study was £47,128 which indicates that this is a highly paid workforce (the Office for National Statistics indicates that the average annual salary for UK employees in the year to April 2012 was £26,500). This could be a source of financial security for employees, particularly because the severance arrangements were calculated according to salary. However, above average pay could be perceived as an impediment to employees entering the labour market, particularly if people are not able to secure alternative employment at an equivalent salary, and be a source of anxiety for employees. This suggests to me that salary could be a factor which influences perspectives on the implications of a WCD for the PC during the WCP.

#### 2.4.4 Professional background:

The Tox Lab sample comprises highly educated, skilled and qualified managers and employees with qualifications up to PhD level. Analysis of the sample indicates that the majority of interviewees were professionally qualified and members of professional bodies including the British Toxicology Society (BTS) and the Institute of Animal Technicians (IAT). The BTS sponsors a professional register of toxicologists which identifies individuals as professional toxicologists provided that they have an appropriate levels of education, training and experience. Once toxicologists are included on the register, they are required to “exercise their professional skill and judgement to the best of their ability and discharge their professional responsibilities with integrity” (*Revised Byelaws of the Institute of Biology*, 2009: 6). On a related theme, the IAT requires all members to comply with the following professional code of conduct:

“In the conduct of their professional duties animal technicians have a moral and legal obligation, at all times, to promote and safeguard the welfare of animals in their care” (Institute of Animal Technology Guide to Professional Conduct, 2008:2).

The majority of the Tox Lab workforce were members of either or both the BTS and IAT and therefore bound by these codes of professional conduct. Such codes could be regarded as governing the responses of professional employees to the WCD decision and governing their conduct during the WCP to ensure the maintenance of standards of professional conduct. This could reduce the perceived risk of sabotage during the WCP and therefore safeguard the professional reputations of Tox Lab and its employees. However, the professional background of the Tox Lab employees could mean that the decision to outsource toxicology could be perceived as undermining their professional background by suggesting that their skills and expertise could be replicated in other organisations. This could be interpreted as disrespectful treatment of professional people. This suggests to me that the professional context of the Tox Lab employees would be a factor which influenced perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP.

## **2.5 Chapter summary**

In this chapter I have examined the key organisation, policy and individual contexts and highlighted how these contextual factors could influence perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP. Consistent with Atkinson (2008) and Guest (2004), my suggestion is that these contextual insights underpin an understanding and explanation of perspectives on the PC during the WCP. In the next chapter, I critically review the relevant literature.



### 3 Literature Review

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The aim of this Tox Lab case study is to investigate the implications of a Workplace Closure Decision (WCD) for the PC during a Workplace Closure Process (WCP). This Literature Review Chapter critically analyses what the literature depicts as the key implications of a WCD for the PC. It is structured around the following Literature Review questions, which are derived from the Research Objectives:

1. How is the PC conceptualised in the literature?

2. How does the literature suggest that WCD will be interpreted through the lens of the PC, for example, as a Psychological Contract Breach (PCB) or Psychological Contract Violation (PCV)?
3. What does the literature suggest to be the implications of a WCD for the state of the PC during a WCP, particularly in the light of any perceptions of PCB and interpretations of PCV? And
4. What does the literature depict as the possible outcomes of the PC during a WCP?

In relation to Literature Review Question (1), I critically analyse the dominant conceptualisation of the PC. This is inspired by Rousseau (1990) and conceptualises a single PC at the level of the individual, constructed from promises and obligations which can be categorised as transactional or relational. I argue that whilst this conceptualisation provides boundaries around the construct which have methodological advantages and avoids potential difficulties in identifying the organisation and its agents, a reliance on the employee's perceptions presents a one-sided perspective on the PC which is inconsistent with the dominant role that management play in the context of a Workplace Closure. Moreover, I argue that the conceptualisation of a single PC is inappropriate in the context of a WCP when a WCD can construct distinct organisations, including the ongoing organisation and the closing workplace. My argument is that the PC needs to be conceptualised at the level of the relationship between the organisation and its employees to reflect the two-way nature of the exchange relationship, with an understanding that a WCD may construct multiple PCs. I draw upon the conceptualisations of Guest (2004) and Marks (2001) to support my argument.

In relation to Literature Review Question (2), I discuss how the literature suggests that a Workplace Closure Decision (WCD) will be perceived as a Psychological Contract Breach (PCB) of job security obligations, which is perceived to be unfair and undermines trust. Drawing upon Morrison and Robinson (1997), it analyses how this PCB is likely to be interpreted as a violation (PCV) due to causal attribution and perceptions of injustice. I suggest that managers and employees in the context of a WCP may be particularly prone to what Morrison and Robinson

(1997: 240) describe as “self-serving biases” which can distort their perspectives in an attempt to construct a version of reality which is favourable to them. I argue that there is scope to extend Morrison and Robinson’s (1997) theoretical model through the integration of multiple perspectives, multiple-foci and the outcomes. In relation to Literature Review Question (3), I argue that the literature suggests that a PCB and PCV will have detrimental implications for the state of the PC. More specifically, drawing upon Rousseau’s (1990) relational – transactional continuum, the literature suggests that a PCB or PCV will contribute to a more transactional PC (Tietz and Nadin: 2011). However, the literature identifies a range of moderators which could potentially counteract a shift towards a more transactional PC.

In relation to Literature Review Question (4), I analyse how the literature assumes that negative outcomes will follow a PCB or PCV, with the main explanatory variable depicted as the norm of reciprocity. I argue that this assumption is plausible but limited in the context of multiple PCs conceptualised at the level of the relationship between the organisation and its employees. Therefore, I highlight alternative explanatory variables, depicted in the literature, for the relationship between PCB and outcomes which seek to explain how PCV operates across multiple PCs. These include targeted reciprocity, the rule of proximity and the spillover effect. I finish the Chapter with the presentation of the conceptual framework derived from this

### **3.1 Literature Review Question (1): How is the PC conceptualised in the literature?**

The PC has been the subject of research for over fifty years and as Conway and Briner (2009: 79) assert, it “has considerable standing within organizational research”. This longevity elevates its status above that of “fad, fashion or folderol” (Wefald and Downey, 2009: 141). In my thesis, the PC is adopted as a framework through which to analyse employment relationships and more specifically the implications of major organisational change for employment relationships. This application of the PC is supported within the literature (Conway and Briner, 2009; Feldheim, 2007). Despite its credibility, it is suggested that the construct is pervaded by conceptual limitations. Roehling (1997: 215) highlights conceptual

ambiguities relating to the level of conceptualisation of the PC; for example, some conceptualisations are at the level of the employee, whilst others are at the level of the relationship between the employee and the organisation. Moreover, Roehling (1997) identifies conceptual ambiguities relating to the beliefs which construct the PC, and in particular, whether these are promises, obligations or expectations. Such conceptual ambiguity is surprising given the robust and sustainable nature of the construct, and is unsatisfactory as it undermines the credibility of the PC construct. There is debate within the literature about approaches to categorising the PC and concerns that such categorisations ignore the contextual nature of the content of the PC (Atkinson: 2008). Moreover, critics such as Cullinane and Dundon (2006: 19) contend that the PC is conceptually limited because it “ignores important structural, institutional and class-based dimensions of social relationships”. It is suggested that the power context and its role in shaping expectations is an area which is downplayed accounts which are underpinned by Rousseau’s (1990) conceptualisation. Therefore, this conceptual limitation identified by Cullinane and Dundon (2006) can be addressed by a consideration of power relationships in order to highlight the relevance of 'structural' or 'systemic' factors in better understanding the PC. This helps to strengthen the credentials of the PC construct as a way of analysing the employment relationship.

My argument in relation to Literature Review Question (1) is that the conceptualisation of the PC has narrowed from the early writers to the normative paradigm inspired by Rousseau (1990) which conceptualises the construct as a single PC, at the level of the individual. I propose that this conceptualisation of the PC is inappropriate for, and inconsistent with, this Tox Lab study due to two key features of a WC context:

1. It under-estimates the role of management in a Workplace Closure (WC) context; and
2. A WC context can construct two distinct organisations if part of an organisation continues whilst another part closes, thereby potentially constructing more than a single PC.

Due to these inconsistencies with the WC context, it is proposed that alternative conceptualisations to that of Rousseau (1990) merit further evaluation for this Tox Lab study and at the end of this section, I clarify my conceptualisation of the PC for the purposes of this Tox Lab study.

For many of the early writers (Argyris: 1960; Levinson *et al*: 1962; Schein: 1965; Kotter: 1973), the PC is conceptualised at the level of the exchange relationship between the employee(s) and their employing organisation. Exemplifying this conceptualisation, Schein (1965: 11) argues that “a psychological contract implies that the individual has a variety of expectations of the organization and that the organization has a variety of expectations of him”. In a similar vein, Kotter (1973: 91) defines the PC as “an implicit contract between an individual and his organisation which specifies what each expects to give and receive from each other in their relationship”. For Argyris (1960), the exchange relationship is a collective one involving groups of employees and their manager, whereas for other early writers (Levinson *et al*: 1962; Schein: 1965; Kotter: 1973), the exchange relationship is between an individual employee and their employer. Furthermore, Levinson *et al* (1962: 38) explored the possibility of PCs “between people in the organization, within work groups, and between groups and the organization”. This suggests the possibility of multiple PCs operating at a horizontal level which is a conceptualisation which has been developed by Marks (2001) and one which I discuss further in this section. Therefore, the origins of the PC construct indicate a broad conceptualisation predominantly at the level of the relationship between the organisation and its employees, with the possibility of additional PCs nested within this overarching relationship.

Rousseau (1990: 123) re-conceptualised the PC construct and defined it as “an individual’s beliefs regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between the focal person and another party”. This definition continues the trend of early writers to identify two parties to the PC, but rather than conceptualising the PC at the level of the relationship between employees and employers, Rousseau (1990) conceptualised the PC exclusively at the level of the

individual employee. Rousseau (1990:391) argued that “psychological contracts exist in the eye of the beholder”. This marks a shift away from the more collective conceptualisations of Levinson *et al*, (1962). Indeed, Nadin and Williams (2012: 111) observe that “This employee-centred approach is at odds with early conceptualisations of the PC where the emphasis is clearly on BOTH parties in the employment relationship”.

Rousseau’s (1989: 126) re-conceptualisation of the PC at the level of the individual is based on the assumption that “The organization, as the other party in the relationship, provides the context for the creation of a psychological contract, but ... cannot perceive”. Rousseau (1989) disputes the process of anthropomorphization which underpins the identification of the organisation and its agents as the other party to the employment relationship and instead, conceptualises the organisation as the silent partner in the relationship. The methodological advantage of Rousseau’s (1990) conceptualisation is that it requires the researcher to gain insights into the perspectives of employees only in order to understand and explain the PC. This provides a simplification of the construct compared with the earlier writers which Truong and Quang (2007: 115) describe as a shift from a bilateral to unilateral conceptualisation.

However, in conceptualising the PC at the level of the individual, Rousseau’s (1989) narrower conceptualisation neglects the role of the employer and can be regarded as a one-sided interpretation of the PC (Guest: 1998). Sisson (2010: 235) asserts that management has “become the major force for change in the arrangements governing the employment relationship”. This implies that management hold an increasingly powerful role in constructing and sustaining employment relationships. To ignore this powerful actor seems to me to be inappropriate, particularly in the context of a WCP where management have space to increase their power in the employment relationship. This is supported by Cullinane and Dundon (2011:626) who observe how in a WC context “The market power of the workers affected is by definition nil, since there is no demand for their services”. Cullinane and Dundon (2011: 625) refer to “the hard line and uncompromising behaviour of employers ... [where] employers have rejected Labour Court recommendations on severance issues, offered much lower terms

than in the past or provided basic statutory entitlements only". This highlights how employers and managers as their agents can shape the construction of the PC in a WC context. Therefore, it is surprising that the employer perspective is neglected within the literature. Indeed Rousseau (1990: 398) stated the importance "that future research explore the employer's perspective". This is a gap in the literature to which this Tox Lab study will contribute and it is proposed that the conceptualisation of the PC at the level of the relationship between the parties can enable greater consideration of the power dynamics between the parties in employment relationships, thereby addressing concerns stated by Cullinane and Dundon (2006).

In contrast to Rousseau (1990), Guest (2004) conceptualises the PC at the level of the relationship between the employer and employee. Guest and Conway (2002: 22) define the PC as "the perceptions of both parties to the employment relationship – organisation and individual – of the reciprocal promises and obligations implied in that relationship". Guest (2004: 546) emphasises the importance of investigating "perceptions of both parties to the employment relationship to determine the level of mutuality of perceptions of promises and obligations and their fulfilment, and the extent to which there is a shared view of attitudinal and behavioural consequences". Guest's (2004) conceptualisation offers the potential to address the limitations associated with Rousseau's (1990) conceptualisation. For the purposes of this Tox Lab study, the position of Guest and Conway (2002) is adopted in conceptualising the PC at the level of the relationship between the organisation and its employees. This level of conceptualisation is regarded as relevant to the Research Objectives of this Tox Lab study. Its credibility is evident in its application in empirical studies which conceptualise the PC at the level of the relationship between the employee and organisation (Atkinson, 2008; Nadin and Williams: 2011; Winter and Jackson: 2006; Martin *et al*, 1998 and 1999; Pate and Martin, 2002; O'Donnell and Shields, 2002). Furthermore, it formed the conceptual framework for a series of Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) surveys investigating the state of the PC undertaken over a ten year period.

However, it is recognised that there are alternative conceptualisations to the level of the relationship between the employer and employee. Marks (2001) calls for a broader conceptualisation of the PC. Marks (2001: 456) contends that Rousseau's (1995) definition of the PC "assumes a level of individual organizational attachment and identity that is inappropriate to some standard work practice such as teamwork ... contingent work and telecommuting". This suggests that the notion of a single PC between the individual and the organisation is inconsistent with contemporary working practices. However, building upon Marks (2001), it is argued that this notion of a single PC is incompatible with the WC which is defined as "one particular form of retrenchment, in which a complete unit (such as a factory, hospital or school) is closed down. In some cases the unit may represent the entire organisation; but in others ... the larger organisation continues to exist" (Hardy, 1985: xii). For the purposes of this study, Tox Lab was the unit which closed, whilst AgCo remained in operation. The assumption that an employee will sustain organizational attachment and identity towards AgCo following the announcement of a WCD would appear to be problematic.

Marks (2001: 456) argues that "it is more useful to replace the individual's single psychological contract with the notion of multiple psychological contracts". This is supported by Cullinane and Dundon (2006: 116) who refer to "the emergence of multiple contracts". Marks (2001: 459) argues that "for most employees, the notion of 'the organisation' is a construct that is represented by several groups within the organisation including the immediate workgroup, top management, subordinates and other individuals whom employees have contact with as part of the organizational setting". This suggests that employees could perceive lateral PCs with colleagues, upward PCs with senior managers and downward PCs with their team members. This broadens the conceptualisation beyond bilateral PCs. In the case of Tox Lab, this implies that the employee's could perceive PCs with their colleagues within teams (which could operate across global boundaries), senior management at AgCo headquarters and within Tox Lab, direct reports for whom they have management responsibility and other colleagues. This highlights the possibility of a more complex conceptualisation of the PC construct than that suggested by Rousseau (1990).



In constructing “a multiple foci conceptualization of the psychological contract”, Marks (2001: 454) emphasises the importance of horizontal PCs between team members. Marks (2001: 461) claims that teamworking is prevalent within contemporary organisations and argues that teamworking contributes to “the increase in dependence on a specific group of people”. It is suggested that this is particularly pertinent to the Industrial Toxicology context where the contentious nature of animal research makes the construction of supportive subcultures important for employees. Holmberg (2011: 148) describes animal research as “a violent context”. Holmberg and Ideland (2010: 356) explain that “performing an animal experiment is an act that is sometimes contested, and in the case of other contested sciences, like nuclear or weapons research, secrecy becomes a tool to avoid open conflict”. The controversy over the use of animals for scientific research means that employment relationships within this context can be perceived as undesirable. Arluke (1991: 306) claims that scientists and technicians conducting animal based-research belong to a “stigmatized occupation” which prompts them to construct boundaries between themselves and those who oppose their work. However, according to Sanders (2010: 267), the controversial nature of animal research prompts employees to depend “on their close relationships within a strong and supportive occupational culture”. This suggests that the organisational context of animal research at Tox Lab may contribute to supportive subcultures which suggests that the perception of horizontal PCs is plausible and worthy of further investigation.

Building upon Marks (2001), it is suggested that if employees can perceive multiple PCs, then arguably organisational agents can similarly perceive multiple PCs, particularly in a WC context. Clair and Dufresne (2004: 1598) argue that downsizing agents have a “dual role as receivers and agents of change”. This is supported by Bligh and Carsten (2005: 496) who contend “that managers will play a unique role in the restructuring effort as both contractual agents and employees”. Bligh and Carsten (2005) found empirical support for Marks’ (2001) multiple foci conceptualisation. Bligh and Carsten (2005: 506) found that managers had bilateral PCs with both senior management and subordinates following a merger and asserted “that psychological contracts can be held simultaneously with multiple organizational constituents”. This provides empirical support for my suggestion that managers may have perceived multiple PCs during the WCP.

Moreover, Chambel and Fortuna's (2015: 1) study of the implications of pay cuts on Portuguese civil servants found that they had "two distinct psychological contracts". This dual employment relationship included one psychological contract with the public institution and one psychological contract with their workplace. This illustrates the complexity of employment relationships in contemporary organisations and highlights the limitation of Rousseau's (1990) conceptualisation of the PC as a relationship between the employee and a single organisation. Both Chambel and Fortuna (2015) and Bligh and Carsten (2005) provide empirical support for the perception of dual PCs by both managers and employees. Drawing upon Marks (2001) and Guest and Conway (2002), I propose that a conceptualisation of multiple PCs at the level of the relationship between employees and the organisation is credible for and relevant to this Tox Lab study.

However, it is acknowledged that such a broader conceptualisation, drawing upon Guest and Conway (2002) and Marks (2001), is not without its own limitations. The literature highlights the difficulty in identifying the organisation as the other party to the exchange. Cullinane and Dundon (2006: 118), for example, contend that "we regard the worker and the organization as easily identifiable and recognizable entities, which is in fact not always the case". Grimshaw *et al's* (2010) study of long-term collaborative working arrangements in the UK healthcare system illustrates the challenges of identifying the employer and of managing employment relationships across hospital networks. This is relevant to Tox Lab because, as part of a Multi National Company (MNC), employees worked across global networks and may identify a number of employment relationships. This lends further support to Marks' (2001) broader conceptualisation of multiple PCs because as Cullinane and Dundon (2006: 118) acknowledge, "in a large organisation, employees are likely to come into contact with a wide range of organizational agents, creating ... multiple exchanges".

Rousseau's (1989) conceptualisation of the PC negates the need to investigate the organisational perspective. Consequently, the organisational perspective has been neglected in the literature compared with the employee perspective (Guest and Conway: 2002), albeit, with some notable exceptions (Raeder, S. Knorr, U. and Hilb, M: 2012; Guest and Conway: 2002; Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler: 2002).

The studies which have investigated the organisational perspective have tended to rely upon management as an agent of the organisation and therefore of the PC (e.g. Guest and Conway: 2002; Lester *et al*: 2002; Herriot *et al*, 1997). However, Rousseau (1990) argues that this is inappropriate because managers perceive a personal PC with employees rather than an organisational PC. Nadin and Williams (2012: 113) comment that “supervisors and managers are themselves employees”. This suggests that the assumption of alignment of interests between the organisation and management is misguided due to the dual role of managers as organisational agents and employees. Coyle-Shapiro and Shore (2007: 7) assert that “the assumption that managers automatically follow the organisation’s interests as obedient agents should not be taken as given – self-interest and other interest may override the organisation’s interests in some circumstances”. This implies that there may be conflicts of interests inherent in the management perspective which may limit the extent to which they can be regarded as organisational proxies.

Some researchers, such as Nadin and Williams (2012) and Atkinson (2008), have overcome this limitation by investigating small businesses where owner managers provide an employer perspective rather than potentially presenting a dual perspective of employer and employee. However, such an approach is not feasible within the context of a Multi National Company such as AgCo and therefore alternative approaches merit further investigation. Guest and Conway (2000) suggest that managers need to perceive themselves as representing the organisation in order to be regarded as proxies. Guest and Conway (2002) interviewed managers and employees from four organisations in order to ascertain whether they regarded themselves, and were regarded by others, as agents of the organisation. They found that the “interviews confirmed that managers were viewed as agents representing the organisation” (Guest and Conway, 2002: 26). This is consistent with Shore and Tetrick (1994: 101) who found that “The employee is more likely to view the manager as the chief agent for establishing and maintaining the psychological contract”. Similarly, Lester *et al* (2001: 40) argue that it generally becomes the responsibility of the employee’s supervisor (acting as an agent on behalf of the organisation) to see that the psychological contract is fulfilled”. Importantly for the Tox Lab study, Shore and Tetrick (1994), Guest and Conway (2002) and Lester *et al* (2001) provide empirical support for the use of

management as proxies of the organisation, subject to recognition of the possibility of conflicts of interest within the management perspective.

Whilst I have argued that Rousseau-inspired conceptualisation of the PC construct under-estimates the role of management, I recognise that some commentators argue for a stronger conceptualisation of the PC at the level of the individual. Seeck and Parzefall (2008: 476), for example, claim that PC research “provides a very limited view of employee’s subjective perceptions of their psychological contract and in particular of how employees influence its content”. Interestingly, in their study of mobile phone content production in Finland, Seeck and Parzefall’s (2008: 485) found evidence of employee agency expressed in “self actualisation, action, influence, and ability to use one’s creativity” which manifested itself in the construction of the PC. This view of employee agency is consistent with Rousseau *et al*’s (2006: 977) concept of “Idiosyncratic employment arrangements (i- deals) ... [which are] special terms of employment negotiated between individual workers and their employers ... that satisfy both parties’ needs”. Both Seeck and Parzefall (2008) and Rousseau *et al* (2006) contend that the employee’s role in the construction of the PC is under-estimated.

However, Seeck and Parzefall (2008: 474) acknowledged that the distinctive organisational context of mobile phone production provided “more space for the exercise of agency” than may be found within more traditional and less creative organisational contexts. This suggests a need to be cautious and sceptical about the amount of agency available for employees due to the balance of power between the parties in contemporary employment relationships. This is supported by Cullinane and Dundon (2006: 119) who argue that “In entering into a relationship with an employer, for the majority of employees, it means that they become subordinate to their employers power and authority”. This renders the concept of i-deals problematic, *idealistic* and inconsistent with the power dynamics of contemporary employment relationships. This suggests that Rousseau’s (1989) narrow conceptualisation of the PC at the level of the individual risks misrepresenting contemporary employment relationships by affording employees more agency than may be available.

In addition to conceptual ambiguities regarding the level of conceptualisation, Roehling (1997) highlights conceptual ambiguities relating to the beliefs which construct the PC. For the early writers, the PC is conceptualised as being constructed from implicit expectations (Levinson *et al*, 1962; Schein, 1965) which Levinson *et al* (1962) argue are driven by a wide range of needs, including those of a psychological and financial nature. This provides a broad scope for the beliefs which comprise the PC. Kotter (1973: 92) argued that expectations could be matched or mismatched, with matching expectations “related to greater job satisfaction, productivity and reduced turnover”. Whilst this provides a strong business case for matching expectations, Kotter’s (1973) work does not illuminate the challenges faced by organisations seeking to match expectations which they are unable or unwilling to meet.

Rousseau (1990) addressed these concerns about the broad scope of expectations in her re-conceptualisation of the PC construct. In contrast to the early writers, Rousseau (1990: 390) argued that the PC consists of promise-based obligations, thereby narrowing the scope of the construct. Rousseau (1990: 390) distinguished between promises and expectations, claiming that “psychological contracts differ from the more general concept of expectations in that contracts are promissory and reciprocal”. A strength of Rousseau’s (1990) re-conceptualisation of the beliefs which comprise the PC is that it provides boundaries for the construct which may be difficult to identify on the basis of expectations. This is relevant to the Tox Lab case study because it is possible that employees may have aspirations and expectations about job security up to and including expectations of a job for life which would be contravened by the WCD. However, unless the organisation has made such promises about job security, then employees may be very unhappy about the WCD, but cannot reasonably claim that the organisation is obliged to deliver on this promise. Alternatively, if employees have been promised job security then it is reasonable that they would perceive that the organisation is obliged to provide job security and be very unhappy about the WCD. This suggests that expectations may be contingent upon promises but also constructed from aspirations which lie outwith the sphere of influence of an organisation. This is supported by Arnold (1996: 514) who observes that expectations relate to what an

employer “should” do, which “could well be taken to mean what would ideally be the case, or what would be appropriate with the benefit of hindsight, or what the person feels he or she deserves or needs even if it was never promised”.

Therefore, it is proposed that Rousseau’s (1990) conceptualisation of the PC comprising of promise-based obligations is appropriate for this Tox Lab study. The adopting of this conceptualisation of the content is supported by Conway and Briner (2005: 23) who argue that “Promises have become the preferred term when defining the psychological contract as they are seen as more clearly contractual, whereas expectations and obligations have more general meanings”. However, it is recognised that there are limitations with this conceptualisation of the content of the PC. Conway and Briner (2005: 26) note that “these distinctions may be hard to identify in practice” which may account for their interchangeable use in contemporary PC research. This interchangeable use is supported by Conway and Briner (2009: 687) who investigated whether promises “were semantically superior to obligations” in a Maltese employment context. They found that the terms had different meanings but could be used interchangeably.

As I have discussed thus far, there is debate within the literature about the beliefs which comprise the content of the PC. There is also debate about approaches to categorising the content of the PC. This is relevant to my study because in order to analyse the implications of the WCD for the state of the PC, I need to understand what type of PC employees perceived during the WCP, before evaluating it. The dominant approach within the literature is to categorise the content of the PC based on Rousseau’s (1990) relational and transactional continuum which is consistent with legal contracts (MacNeil, 1985). According to O’Donohue *et al* (2014: 3), transactional PC are defined by “an economic content focus, relative stability and limited flexibility, and specific defined time-bound exchange”. In contrast, relational PCs are defined as having “a socio-emotional content focus, with evolving contributions that represent mutual investments from which withdrawal is difficult”. Table 3.1 compares the key features of transactional and relational types of PCs and provides examples of promises and obligations which are typically categorised as transactional and relational:

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Transactional PCs</b>	<b>Relational PCs</b>
<b>Time frame</b>	Short-term, time bound promises	<b>Long-term, open ended promises</b>
<b>Degree of specificity</b>	Highly specific	<b>Loosely specified</b>
<b>Resources exchanged</b>	Tangible, with monetary value	<b>Intangible, likely to be socio-emotional</b>
<b>Explicitness of promises</b>	Explicit	<b>Implicit</b>
<b>Negotiation</b>	Likely to be explicit and require formal agreement by both parties	<b>Implicit and unlikely to involve actual agreement by both parties</b>
<b>Examples of promises / obligations</b>	<b>Notice</b> <b>Proprietary protection</b> <b>Minimum stay</b> <b>Transfers</b> <b>No competitor support</b> <b>Advancement</b> <b>High pay</b> <b>Merit pay</b>	<b>Overtime</b> <b>Loyalty</b> <b>Extra role behavior</b> <b>Training</b> <b>Job security</b> <b>Development</b> <b>Support</b>

**Table 3.1: Comparing transactional and relational contracts (Source: Conway and Briner, 2005: 44; and Robinson et al, 1994: 148)**

Empirical support for this two-dimensional categorisation is evident which suggests that it is a credible approach for conceptualising the contents of PCs (Rousseau: 1990; O'Donnell and Shields, 2002; Raja *et al*, 2004; Atkinson, 2008; George, 2009; Tietze and Nadin, 2011). In relation to the Tox Lab study, this relational / transactional typology could provide some interesting insights into the content of

the PC. Notwithstanding the WCD, Table 3.1 suggests to me that managers and employees would perceive the content of the PC to be more relational than transactional due to the tenure of employees and the organisational context of an animal research laboratory. With regards to tenure, the Research Methods Chapter refers to how the average length of service of the sample is 23.7 years. This suggests a long-term relationship between the parties which is consistent with a relational PC. It is plausible that during a 23.7 year employment relationship, the nature of the exchange between the parties will have evolved and some emotional attachment will have developed between the parties beyond a purely economic transaction. This is consistent with the loosely specified agreement and socio-emotional relationship which is indicative of a relational PC in Table 3.1.

Furthermore, the role of the laboratory animals in industrial toxicology may contribute to this socio-emotional relationship due to employee attachments to, and relationships with, the animals in their care. This is supported by Sanders (2010) in his study of veterinary technicians. Sanders (2010: 256) referred to the “relational context of the clinic” and found that “interviewees all emphasised the fact that their job focused on animals was its most appealing and rewarding element”. Sanders (2010: 263) suggested that these veterinary technicians “saw their work as centrally involved with building and maintaining relationships”. Similarly, Holmberg (2008: 333) asserted that “animals and human workers ... depend on each other”. This implies that the context of an animal research laboratory with its relationship of dependency between animals and employees, may contribute to the construction of emotional relationships and therefore a relational PC. The research evidence suggests that socio-emotional relationships yield more positive consequences than economic exchanges (Chaudhry and Song: 2014). This implies to me that relational PCs are regarded as more desirable than transactional PCs and therefore a possible characteristic of a positive state of the PC.

However, the literature highlights limitations with the relational and transactional depiction of the PC which suggest that this needs to be applied with caution. Schalk *et al*, (2010: 91) observe that the “distinction between transactional and relational contracts is not entirely clear”. This is evident with training which has been



categorised as “either, both or neither transactional and relational” (Conway and Briner, 2009: 89). This suggests that there is variation in the categorisation of the beliefs which construct the PC which could contribute to conceptual confusion. Indeed, O’Donohue *et al* (2014: 4) contend that “it is unlikely that an individual’s PC will have characteristic features of only one type. It is more likely that a PC will reflect an idiosyncratic combination of both types of contract features, but with one predominating type”. This suggests to me the need for caution in the application of the transactional – relational categorisation of the PC.

Herriot *et al*’s (1997) content study of the PC addresses some of the concerns about the simplistic nature of the transactional – relational distinction by applying this typology at the level of the relationship between the employee and the organisation. They identify some areas of overlap between the parties regarding the content of the PC but interestingly found that “Employees are clear about what matters to them: the basic outcomes of fair pay, safe hours and conditions and a degree of job security ... Managers representing the organisation emphasize the provision of less tangible offers: humanity and recognition” (Herriot *et al*, 1997: 160). This implies that managers and employees could hold different perceptions of the content of the PC which means that this could be a more contentious matter than suggested by the simplified categorisation of relational or transactional. This recognition of the possibly contested content of the PC is important for the Tox Lab study given the research evidence of Gall (2011) and Cullinane and Dundon (2011) that the content of the workplace closure deal, rather than the closure decision, is the subject of contestation. In relation to the Tox Lab study, it underlines the importance of investigating perceptions of the content of the PC from the perspectives of employees and managers.

Atkinson’s (2008: 458) study applied Rousseau’s (1990) categorisation and found that “In some instances, however, this categorisation did not cover the obligations identified in the case study firms and, in others, it did not ‘fit’ the obligations under consideration”. Atkinson (2008: 458) argued that “the content of the psychological contract is likely to be context dependent”. This implies that the examples of promises and obligations listed in Table 3.1. will not necessarily be relevant when applied to the industrial toxicology context. For example, it is plausible that

employees in an animal research laboratory perceive particular obligations to care for animals and to perform their jobs well. Holmberg (2011: 158) stated that “killing is no fun ... and doing it well is an obligation”. This implies that employees in an animal research laboratory may perceive an obligation towards animal welfare, supported by legal regulation, which is not captured by the example promises and obligations listed in Table 3.1. but nonetheless is an important obligation in the context of the Tox Lab study.

Within the UK, the use of animals for scientific research purposes is governed by the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 and the European Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes which was implemented in January 2013. This legislative framework regulates the ways in which animal can be for scientific research and regulates the organisational context for managers and employees in the industry. The legislative framework is intended to protect the well being of the laboratory animals and is enforced by Home Office Inspectors who can visit animal research facilities without prior notification. An implication of this legal regulation and inspection is that employment relationships in this context may prioritise legal compliance, which could manifest itself in standardised labour process. Furthermore, managers may perceive an obligation to undertake close monitoring of employees in order to maintain legal compliance. Such obligations are not reflected in Table 3.1. but are salient within the context of Tox Lab.

Furthermore, Sanders (2010: 244) describes the work of veterinary technicians as “dirty work”. Parallels can be drawn between the work of veterinary technicians and technicians working in an animal facility laboratory, since both jobs involve “dealing with excrement and other “unclean” bodily products and ... death and dead bodies” (Sanders, 2010: 244). However, as Davies (2003) outlines, there are key distinctions between the role of veterinary and animal technicians, in that the latter “are required to create animals, via intensive breeding programmes, maintain them as healthy as possible which is essential for the validity of the experimental results, watch them being experimented upon (in some cases conduct the experimental procedure themselves) and finally euthanase them in a professional manner”. This specific type of “dirty work” (Sanders, 2010: 244) means that those

engaged in animal research are obliged to construct mechanisms to cope with the controversial and emotional demands of their job. It may also mean that in exchange for their “dirty work” (Sanders, 2010: 244), employees perceive that the organisation is obliged to pay particular consideration to their physical and emotional well being as part of their employment relationship due to the emotional demands of their work. This is supported by Davies (2003) who suggested that organisations may be obliged to provide grief counselling for animal technicians. It also supports my suggestion that notwithstanding the WCD, it is plausible that managers and employees would perceive a relational PC at Tox Lab. In exchange for caring for animals and the toxicology studies, employees perceive that the organisation is obliged to care for them, which is suggestive of a relational PC.

These contextually-derived obligations illustrate limitations in the examples of promises and obligations listed in Table 3.1. This suggests that a rigid application of Rousseau’s (1990) two dimensional typology might limit contextual insight would could be problematic for this Tox Lab study. Therefore, it is proposed that the relational and transactional distinction can be a useful depiction of the PC when embedded within its contexts and used as an organising framework and analytical device, rather than rigidly applied as a checklist to enable generalisations.

As noted by Taylor and Tekleab (2004: 264), given the limitations of Rousseau’s (1990) two-dimensional framework, “it is not surprising that other ways of assessing the nature of the psychological contract have begun to emerge”. Rousseau’s (1995) 2x2 typology of contemporary PCs is an example of an alternative framework for analysing the content of the PC. This typology includes the transactional – relational distinction along with two other types of PCs which are described as ‘transitional’ and ‘balanced’. Rousseau (1995) implies that transitional PCs may emerge during a redundancy process which make this type of PC potentially relevant to the Tox Lab study. However, there is limited empirical support for Rousseau’s (1995) 2x2 typology. Lee *et al* (2000) and Hui *et al* (2004) purported to apply Rousseau’s (1995) 2x2 typology but interestingly excluded transitional PCs from their analysis on the basis that “transitional arrangement represent no commitment from either party and do not constitute a true

psychological contract” (Hui *et al*, 2004: 312). Given the lack of empirical credibility, Rousseau’s (1995) 2x2 typology is not adopted for this Tox Lab study.

A further alternative to Rousseau’s (1995) transactional – relational typology of the PC is contributed by Herriot and Pemberton’s (1997) who argue that the content of the PC is constructed and re-constructed through a process of negotiation and re-negotiation. In the context of a WC, Gall (2011) and Cullinane and Dundon (2011) claim that the parties perceive the need to renegotiate the content of the PC which implies that Herriot and Pemberton’s (1997) model of contracting may be relevant to the Tox Lab study. However, it is debatable as to whether this model reflects the balance of power in a redundancy context. During a compulsory redundancy process, such as the WCP at Tox Lab, organisations can impose a poor deal on employees, knowing that employees will be leaving the organisation and may be reluctant to act in a way which jeopardises any severance payments. This imbalance of power in a redundancy context reduces the incentives for managers to re-negotiate PCs with employees. This is supported by Gall (2011: 626) who argues that applying bargaining and negotiation theory “to redundancy scenarios becomes problematic, particularly so when the threatened redundancies are ‘across-the-board’ as in the instance of a factory shut down”. Based on Gall (2011), I will not draw upon Herriot and Pemberton’s (1997)’s model of the contracting process for this Tox Lab study due to its inconsistency with the balance of power during a WCP. Instead, I will apply the dominant relational and transactional typology in this Tox Lab case study, albeit as an organising framework and analytical device rather than a rigid means of generalisation.

In summary, I have discussed how the PC is conceptualised within the literature including alluding to conceptual ambiguities identified by Roehling (1997), different approaches to categorising the content of the PC and concerns about the apolitical nature of the PC construct (Cullinane and Dundon, 2006). My intention is to be explicit about my conceptualisation in order to address such ambiguities and concerns. In relation to Literature Review Question (1), I have discussed how the early writers conceptualised the PC at the level of the relationship between the organisation and its employees, before Rousseau (1990) narrowed the conceptualisation to a single PC at the level of the individual. I have argued that

this neglects the role of the organisation which is inconsistent with their powerful role in contemporary employment relationships and the context of a WCD. Drawing upon Guest and Conway (2002), I have suggested that the organisation's perspective can be investigated through participants who identify themselves as, and are identified by others, as organisational agents. I have highlighted the limitation of the conceptualisation of a single PC in the context of larger organisation and particularly in the context of a WCD which may construct a clearly identifiable surviving organisation and closing workplace. My intention is to draw upon Marks' (2001) concept of multiple PCs. Therefore, the following conceptualisation of the PC construct is adopted for the Tox Lab study:

- At the level of the relationship between the individual and the organisation, represented by senior management (Guest and Conway: 2002; Guest: 2004);
- As multiple PCs (Marks: 2001); and
- Constructed from promise-based obligations which can be categorised as relational or transactional.

In the next section I critically analyse how the literature suggests that a WCD will be interpreted.

### **3.2 Literature Review Question (2) How does the literature suggest that the WCD will be interpreted through the lens of the PC?**

The literature suggests that the WCD will be interpreted by employees as a PC Breach (PCB) or PC Violation (PCV) (Datta *et al*: 2010; Turnley and Feldman: 1998; Rousseau: 1995; Rousseau and Aquino: 1993). The terms PCB and PCV were used interchangeably until Morrison and Robinson (1997) distinguished between them. PCB is defined as "the cognition that one's organisation has failed to meet one or more obligations within one's psychological contract" (Morrison and Robinson, 1997: 230). Bligh and Carsten (2005: 496) comment that "communication, job security, social support and work-role stability become more

salient and increasingly vulnerable during times of change and restructuring". In the case of the WCD as Tox Lab, it is plausible that the parties may perceive that the organisation has breached its promises regarding job security and therefore interpret the WCD as a PCB.

PCV, on the other hand, is defined as "the emotional and affective state that may, under certain conditions, follow from the belief that one's organisation has failed to adequately maintain the psychological contract" (Morrison and Robinson, 1997: 230). In the case of Tox Lab, this suggests that if the WCD is perceived as a PCB, then this could be interpreted as a PCV which will manifest itself in a more extreme emotional interpretation. These definitions highlight the cognitive basis of PCB compared with the emotional nature of PCV. Morrison and Robinson (1997: 230) argue that "feelings of violation are distinct from the cognitive evaluations that underlie them and a complex interpretation process intercedes between the two". This implies that a PCB could be perceived and that it may or may not be interpreted as a PCV. Robinson and Morrison (2000: 543) found empirical support for this distinction between PCB and PCV. Therefore, in the case of Tox Lab, the literature suggests that the WCD could be interpreted as a PCB or PCV depending on a number of factors which are elaborated upon within this section.

According to Robinson and Rousseau (1994: 255), "psychological contracts are frequently violated". This suggests that if the parties interpreted the WCD at Tox Lab as a PCV then this would not be particularly exceptional. This is surprising as it implies that the extreme emotional reaction which characterises perceptions of violation is prevalent in contemporary workplaces. As discussed later in this section, PCV is associated with negative and undesirable consequences, yet if this is the norm, then this would suggest that employment relationships between managers and employees are poor, with employees experiencing dissatisfaction arising from disappointments on a regular basis. However, evidence from the Workplace Employment Relations Study (WERS) (2011: 26) indicates that 96% of managers evaluated their relationship with employees as very good or good whilst 64% of employees evaluated their relationship with managers as very good or good. This does not support Rousseau and Robinson's (1994) claim about the prevalence of PCV. However, the sample for Rousseau and Robinson's (1994)

study comprised MBA alumni who were in the early stages of their careers with limited tenure. As Robinson and Rousseau (1994: 257) note, “MBA graduates may experience more violation because of the overzealous efforts of recruiters”. Therefore, I suggest that there is a need to be cautious about generalising these findings about the prevalence of PCV to other contexts. For example, at Tox Lab, where the average tenure of the sample was over 23 years, it would seem problematic to sustain functional employment relationships if PCV was the norm. Furthermore, if employees perceived patterns of fulfilment over a 23 year tenure, then if the WCD was interpreted as a PCV then this would be exceptional rather than the norm.

There is a lack of consensus within the literature regarding the causes of PCB and PCV. Zhao *et al* (2007: 650) propose that PCB is triggered by “a significant workplace event” whereas Parzefall and Coyle-Shapiro (2011: 22) argue that “contract breach is not necessarily a discrete event ... but supports the idea that there are a number of ways in which promises can be broken”. These interpretations illustrate the broad scope for PCB or PCV to be triggered by a WCD. Zhao *et al*’s (2007) interpretation implies that the event of the announcement of the WCD or the event of redundancy (e.g. the exit) can trigger perceptions of a PCB and PCV. Alternatively, Parzefall and Coyle-Shapiro’s (2011) interpretation implies that the workplace closure decision, process and event can trigger a PCB and PCV.

Furthermore, Morrison and Robinson (1997) contributed a theoretical model which suggests that PCV develops from either reneging or incongruence. Morrison and Robinson (1997: 233) explain that reneging is “when agents of the organisation recognise that an obligation exists but knowingly fail to follow through on that obligation”. In the case of Tox Lab, this suggests that managers, in their capacity as organisational agents, were aware that the organisation had an obligation towards job security but still made the WCD, aware that this would be perceived as not delivering on that job security obligation. Morrison and Robinson (1997) propose that reneging can be due to inability to fulfil promises, for example due to changes in the internal and external contexts, or unwillingness to deliver on promises. In the case of Tox Lab, the WC decision-makers could be perceived as

reneging on job security obligations due to circumstances beyond their control, such as a change in AgCo's strategy or in the toxicology industry, which constructed barriers to the fulfilment of job security obligations. Alternatively, Morrison and Robinson (1997) suggest that reneging can be due to an unwillingness on the part of the organisational agents to deliver on their promises. In the case of Tox Lab, managers could be perceived as deliberately reneging on their promises of job security in making the WCD, for example, if they perceived that the business was no longer viable. Morrison and Robinson (1997) claim that reneging is the more common cause of PCB, which would suggest that this may be relevant to the interpretation of the WCD at Tox Lab.

Incongruence, on the other hand, is defined as "when an employee has perceptions of a given promise that differ from those held by organisational agents" (Morrison and Robinson, 1997: 235). In the case of Tox Lab, this could be misunderstandings between the parties about the job security obligations. Organisational agents could perceive that they had made limited promises about job security whilst employees could perceive that the organisation had promised them a job for life. In this example, organisational agents could perceive that they had fulfilled their limited obligations relating to job security whilst employees could perceive that the WCD violated the promise of a job for life. Such incongruence could cause employees to perceive PCB.

Morrison and Robinson (1997) highlight a number of factors which they propose to influence whether or not a PCB is interpreted as a PCV. These factors include an evaluation of the outcomes of PCB, attribution for the PCB, fairness assessments, and the type of PC. In relation to the outcomes, Morrison and Robinson (1997) suggest that when a PCB has negative and undesirable implications, it is more likely to be interpreted as a PCV. In the case of Tox Lab, this suggests that if employees perceived the job loss arising from the WCD as a negative outcome, then they may perceive the PCB as a PCV. Latack *et al* (1995: 311) assert that the "impact of job loss is generally detrimental to individuals by virtually any criteria a researcher chooses to examine". For example, job loss is associated with unfavourable health outcomes (Eliason and Storrie: 2009; Greenhalgh *et al*: 1988), detrimental financial outcomes (Knapp and Harms: 2002) and negative



implications for future employment prospects (Turnbull and Wass: 1997). On the basis of an assessment of the outcomes of the WCD, the literature suggests an interpretation of PCV.

With regards to attribution, Morrison and Robinson (1997) predict that a PCB will be interpreted as a PCV when it is attributed to the organisation deliberate reneging on its promises, leading employees to blame the organisation for the PCB. In respect of Tox Lab, this implies that if the parties interpreted the WCD as deliberate reneging on job security promises, then this is likely to be interpreted as a PCV attributable to the organisation. Lester *et al* (2002) found that employees were more prone to attribute PCB to deliberate reneging than their supervisors who were more likely to attribute PCB to disruption.

However, due to the conceptualisation of the PC at the level of the relationship between the parties, there is a need to consider different perspectives. Lester *et al* (2007) investigated Line Manager and employee perceptions of, and attributions for, PCB. They found that employees were more likely than their Line Managers to perceive PCB. In addition, employees tended to attribute PCB to reneging and incongruence whereas Line Managers tended to attribute PCB to circumstances beyond the control of the organisation. This suggests that there may be different perspectives between the parties. Guest and Conway (2002: 33) found that “perceived breach of the psychological contract is less likely to be reported where communication is rated effective”. In the context of a WCD, effective communication could relate to the explanations provided for the WCD. This is supported by Lester *et al* (2007) who investigated the role of organisation’s social accounts and identified three categories of social accounts; reframing, legitimizing and mitigating. Lester *et al* (2007) argued that the adequacy of the social account, rather than the category, was key in counter-acting the detrimental implications of management decisions.

The dominant narrative in the WC literature attributes this phenomenon to neo-liberal ideologies. Contu *et al* (2013: 365) argue that restructuring activities including workplace closure have been “legitimized with reference to neo-liberal

ideals ... a necessity in global competition". Vaara and Tienari (2008) suggest that Multi-National Companies (MNCs), in particular, rely upon discursive strategies to legitimise controversial events include workplace closure. This is particularly relevant to Tox Lab as it is part of a MNC. This suggests that social accounts may seek to legitimize the WCD as an inevitable consequence of the global market place. However, Hirsch and De Soucey (2006: 171) claim "that the language of restructuring is regularly used to mask, reframe, and sugarcoat economic slumps as possessing positive social outcomes". This implies that the dominant narrative to explain a WCD may lack adequacy and credibility and contribute to interpretations of PCV.

Morrison and Robinson (1997) contend that fairness assessment will influence whether a PCB is interpreted as a PCV. This includes an assessment of procedural justice which considers "whether the procedures were consistent, whether the employee had a voice, and whether the decision was made in an impartial manner" (Morrison and Robinson, 1997: 245). In the case of Tox Lab, this suggests that evaluations of the procedures used to reach the WCD will have an impact on fairness assessments. In the UK, the procedures used to reach and implement the WCD are regulated by a legal framework derived from the European Union Information and Consultation of Employees (ICE) Directive. The UK's ICE Regulations 2005 introduced collective consultations obligations for organisations seeking to make 100 or more employees redundant over a period of 90 days or less. Other legal obligations on organisations in a workplace closure context include consulting with appropriate representatives over ways of avoiding redundancy, reducing the numbers of employees affected, mitigating the effects of redundancy and paying severance pay to redundant workers with two years or more continuous employment.

The UK's ICE Regulations appear to generate a set of specific legal obligations for organisations which might be expected to be an enabler of procedural justice and a source of protection for employees in a redundancy situation. However, this is disputed by Taylor *et al's* (2009: 42) study which "exposes major faultlines in the effectiveness of the UK's ICE Regulations to provide employees with even the most limited protection against corporate plans to reorganize production and make

wholesale redundancies". Furthermore, the UK redundancy consultation procedures were reformed in April 2013 when the collective consultation period for redundancy was reduced from 90 to 45 days. This suggests that there is limited legal support for employee involvement and participation in the redundancy process. Therefore, the prospects for perceptions of procedural justice do not look promising in relation to Tox Lab due to a lack of opportunity for employee voice.

Fairness assessments are also contingent upon evaluations of interactional justice which relates to interpersonal treatment, for example, perceptions of honest, respectful and dignified treatment. In the case of Tox Lab, this highlights the importance of transparency in communication of the WCD and the quality of information available to employees during the WCP, along with perceptions about whether the WCD is perceived to be disrespectful, as well as assessments of treatment during the WCP. The importance of favourable perceptions about information is supported by Rousseau and Anton (1988: 284) who identified that the "explanations and reasons given for the termination do appear to impact on perceived fairness". This implies that the narrative constructed to legitimise workplace closure decisions can be an important factor in assessments of fairness. Drawing upon Morrison and Robinson (1997), I suggest that justice perceptions relating to the communication of the WCD will be a key factor in influence interpretations on the WCD, particularly in the early stages of the WCP.

Therefore, based on Morrison and Robinson's (1997) model of PCV, it is plausible that the WCD will be perceived as a PCB which will subsequently be interpreted as a PCV due to the undesirable outcomes, attributions and injustice perceptions. This interpretation of the WCD as a PCV is supported by Datta *et al* (2010: 308) who state that "downsizing is often perceived as a violation of the psychological contract". Furthermore, Turnley and Feldman's (1998) study of PCV during organisational restructuring found evidence of perceptions of violation. They claimed that managers working in the context of re-structuring organisations "were significantly more likely to feel their psychological contracts had been violated" (Turnley and Feldman, 1998: 75), compared with managers working in a non-restructuring context. This provides further evidence of the perception that a WCD is a PCB which is subsequently interpreted as a PCV.

I will adopt Morrison and Robinson's (1997) model of PCV in this Tox Lab case study in order to investigate interpretations of the WCD by the parties and to examine if they are consistent with the literature in interpreting the WCD as a PCV. There is empirical support for Morrison and Robinson's (1997) model of PCV which supports its adoption in this Tox Lab case study (Chambel and Fortuna: 2015; Robinson and Morrison: 2000). However, despite its strengths, there are limitations with Morrison and Robinson's (1997) theoretical framework. The model explores the causes and development of PCV and in doing so provides a much needed conceptual distinction between PCB and PCV which has important implications for research. Whilst Morrison and Robinson (1997) refer to the negative implications arising from PCV, they do not integrate these into their model. Instead, the model stops when PCV develops. This is unsatisfactory when applied to Tox Lab because if the WCD was interpreted as a PCV then this occurred at the start of the WCP and this was not the end of the story but rather the start of a three year WCP. The model does not help to understand any subsequent development of PCV beyond its interpretation including the implications of PCV during the long-term WCP. This suggests to me that the model may need to be extended for the Tox Lab study in order to permit investigation of the PC during the WCP and to integrate the implications of PCV into the model.

Furthermore, Morrison and Robinson (1997: 249) recognise that the model focuses on the employee perceptions of PCB but notes that it "is important to recognize, however, that agents of the organisation will have their own interpretation of the situation". Cullinane and Dundon (2006: 7) assert that "the employer perspective on violation have been largely unexplored" whilst Guest and Conway (2002: 24) agree that "while violation has been extensively studied from an employer perspective, little research to date has explored employer perceptions of contract violation". This is a gap in the literature to which this Tox Lab study intends to contribute through the inclusion of the perspective of management as agents of the organisation.

### **3.3 Literature Review Question (3): What does the literature identify as the possible implications of a WCD for the state of the PC during a WCP?**

In relation to Literature Review Question (3), I discuss what the literature depicts as the state of the PC and what the literature identifies as the possible implications of a WCD for the state of the PC during the WCP. Guest (2004: 549) explains that “the state of the psychological contract is concerned with ‘whether the promises and obligations have been met, whether they are fair and their implications for trust’”. This suggests to me that the state is concerned with an evaluation of the content of the PC, culminating in positive and / or negative perceptions about the state of the PC. The literature suggests that the state of the PC will be adversely affected by a PCB or PCV. This is supported by Tietz and Nadin (2011: 319) who contend that “For employees, a failure on behalf of the employer to fulfil their obligations and promises results in a range of withdrawal behaviours and a shift towards a more transactional orientation towards their employer”. This suggests to me that a PCB or PCV will contribute to employee’s retreating into a more transactional PC which is regarded as having less favourable consequences than a relational PC (Chaudhry and Song: 2014), thereby contributing to negative evaluations of the state of the PC. In the case of Tox Lab, the literature suggests that the WCD will be perceived as a PCB, which will be interpreted as a PCV, with detrimental implications for the state of the PC during the WCP by shifting it from a relational to a more transactional PC during the WCP. This implies to me that evaluations of the state of the PC will be negative.

Interestingly, Turnley and Feldman (1998) identified the specific content of the PC that managers in a restructuring context perceived to have been strongly violated, violated to some extent and surprisingly, perceptions of obligations that managers exceeded. These findings are summarised in Table 3.2:

<b>Promises / obligations perceived to have been violated</b>	<b>Promises / obligations perceived to have been violated to some extent</b>	<b>Promises / obligations perceived to have been exceeded</b>
<b>1. Job security;</b> <b>2. Advancement opportunities;</b> <b>3. Healthcare benefits;</b> <b>4. Responsibility and power; and</b> <b>5. Amount of input into important decisions.</b>	<b>1. Feedback;</b> <b>2. Frequency of pay increases;</b> <b>3. Career development;</b> <b>4. Bonuses for exceptional work;</b> <b>5. Base pay;</b> <b>6. Supervisor support</b> <b>7. Training</b>	<b>1. Overall benefits</b> <b>2. Organisational support</b> <b>3. Job challenge and excitement</b> <b>4. Retirement benefits</b>

**Table 3.2: Summary of the specific contents of the PC which perceived to have been violated / violated to some extent and exceeded in restructuring organisations (adapted from Turnley and Feldman: 1998)**

Applying Rousseau's (1995) relational – transactional depiction of the PC to Table 3.2 suggests that relational promises and obligations were perceived to have been violated in restructuring organisations, whereas those violated to some extent appear to include both relational and transactional items. This suggests that relational types of PC may be difficult to sustain during a WCP. However, the perceptions that the organisation had exceeded both relational and transactional promises suggests a need for caution in generalising the perception of violation in a WC context to the exclusion of any alternative and simultaneous perceptions.

The literature is vague about the implications of exceeding obligations. Turnley *et al* (2003: 188) observe that “most prior research has ignored the fact that psychological contracts can be over-fulfilled as well as under-fulfilled”. Guest (1998) questions whether over-fulfilment might be construed as a PCV. Turnley *et al* (2003: 190) suggest that “the likelihood of perceiving under-fulfilment tends to be greater than the likelihood of perceiving over-fulfilment and that the motivation to increase contributions in cases of over-fulfilment is likely to be less compelling than the motivation to decrease contributions in cases of under-fulfilment”. Therefore, the literature depicts over-fulfilment of obligations are exceptional with uncertainty about their implications. However, whilst the literature suggests that the state of the PC is likely to be evaluated as negative during a WCP, alternative and more positive evaluations are possible, albeit depicted as unlikely in the literature.

Interestingly, Morrison and Robinson (1997) predict that a PCB will be more damaging to a relational than transactional PC. As discussed in relation to Table 3.1., the PC at Tox Lab could be categorised as relational due to the tenure of the employees and the role of laboratory animals in constructing interdependent relationships. The implication of this is that if the PCB is interpreted as a PCV, which is plausible based on the research evidence, then such an interpretation will contribute to extreme emotional reactions and thus have detrimental implications for the state of the PC.

However, there is evidence in the literature which suggests to me that the assumed detrimental implications of a PCB or PCV for the state of the PC can be modified. The literature suggests that organisational inputs, such as leaders and HRM policies, and individual variables, such as age and ideology can modify employee’s responses to PCB and PCV, with favourable implications for the state of the PC. There is research evidence which suggests that HRM policies and procedures can modify the detrimental implications of a PCB for the state of the PC. Interestingly, Raeder *et al* (2012) found that the “overall scale of HRM practices turned out to significantly predict the fulfilment of the psychological contract, whereas the set of individual HRM practices did not”. This is consistent with other studies which found that bundles of HRM practices were associated with fulfilment of the PC and

therefore a positive evaluation of the state of the PC (Guzzo and Noonan: 1994; Westwood et al: 2001; Guest and Conway: 2002).

In the context of a WCP, a bundle of HR practices has been described as a Socially Responsible (SR) approach to WC (Hansson and Wigblad, 2006). A SR-approach entails which the provision of “a retrenchment programme ... severance payments, educational and re-training programmes and outplacement assistance” (Hansson and Wigblad, 2006: 939). Such an approach is exemplified by Guest and Peccei’s (1992) case study of the closure of BAe’s Wadebridge plant and was found to contribute to a smooth WCP, thereby suggesting a positive evaluation of the state of the PC. This is also evident in Rousseau and Aquino’s (1993) study of PCV in relation to job terminations. They argued that severance, outplacement, employee voice, training and advance notice had favourable implications for justice perceptions and therefore contributed to positive evaluation of the state of the PC. This is relevant to the WCP at Tox Lab’s because employees were eligible for a generous contractual severance package, unlimited outplacement support, an active staff representation committee, a budget of up to £5,000 for re-training and notice ranging from 3-12 months, all of which are consistent with Rousseau and Aquino (1993) and a SR approach. This implies to me that at Tox Lab, the SR approach to the WCP could contribute to favourable justice perceptions and modify the potentially detrimental implications of a PCB for the state of the PC.

The alternative is described as a non-SR approach to the WCP which is characterised as a fast process which “does not consider the demands and requirements of the labour union and the workers ... without any active support to the employees, neglecting the negative impact of the decision on employees” (Hansson and Wigblad, 2006: 939). Hansson and Wigblad (2006) argue that a non-SR is the dominant approach in practice, fuelled by management concerns relating to the detrimental organisations implications of the workplace closure process. Wigblad *et al* (2012: 161) explain the preference of managers for the non-SR approach due to the anticipation of “difficult industrial relations and diminished productivity after the closure was announced because the workers, their collective agencies and possibly the wider community had to deal with resentment, uncertainty and distress over the job losses”. In addition to these Employment



Relations concerns, it is plausible that organisations may be unwilling or unable to invest in a SR approach to workplace closure. An organisation faced with closure may lack the financial resources to invest in costly redeployment activities for example. This could be a barrier to achieving the potential modification of the state of the PC during the WCP.

Although the consensus in the literature appears to be that bundles of HRM practices are potentially more effective moderators of the state of the PC than individual HRM practices, there is research evidence supporting the use of specific elements of the SR bundle, including redeployment policies. Doherty (1998: 348), for example, argues that “Outplacement has been shown to contribute to the successful exit of redundant individuals, as well as providing organisational benefits in managing redundancy”. This suggests that outplacement policies could modify the detrimental implications of a PCB with favourable implications for evaluations of the state of the PC. Alewell and Hauff (2013: 19) argue that “Employers’ motives behind the offer of termination benefits focus on social responsibility, survivors, transaction and financial costs and reputation on the labour market”. This is supported by Parzefall (2012) who investigated the perceptions of workers in Finland who experienced an alternative HR approach compared to the norm of immediate job loss following redundancy. Instead, redundant workers were transferred to Competence Pool where they remained on full pay for a period of around three months, engaged in job searching activities, before typically exiting the organisation with severance pay. The redundant workers reported favourable perceptions of the Competence Pool and for some workers it symbolised paternalism and functioned as a coping mechanism. Nonetheless, the majority of redundant workers reported perceptions of PCB. Parzefall (2012: 805) suggests that the Competence Pool “helped to buffer against the worst and to restore the balance in the psychological contract at least to some extent”.

Parzefall’s (2012) contribution is relevant to the Tox Lab study because it provides insights into a workplace closure deal which resembles that which was introduced at Tox Lab during the workplace closure process. At Tox Lab, the redundant workers were transferred into a construct which was called a Career Change

Centre (CCC) where their role became job searching on normal salary. This was supported by unlimited access to Redeployment Consultants and generous support for re-training activities. It is plausible that the employees at Tox Lab may perceive that the CCC enables the organisation to deliver on its promises and obligations to support employees through the workplace closure process. If this is the case, then the CCC, as an example of an alternative HR arrangement to immediate layoff, could be perceived as moderator the detrimental implications of PCB for the state of the PC.

The literature also suggests that HRM policies regarding leavers could modify the detrimental implications of a PCB on the state of the PC. Harris and Sutton (1986) studied the leaving policies and practices of six organisations during their WCP. They found that leaver policies which included the use of parting ceremonies incorporating parties, picnics and dinners could mitigate the detrimental implications of workplace closure for leavers. Harris and Sutton (1986: 25) claim that “parting ceremonies help members cope with the affective demands of organisational death by creating settings in which members can provide each other with emotional support”. This implies that leaver policies which include parting ceremonies can modify the detrimental implications of violation and contribute to positive evaluations of the state of the PC.

Other potential organisational inputs which can modify the detrimental implications of a PCB for the state of the PC include leaders and mentors. Zagenczyk *et al* (2009: 256) found that “mentoring relationships and supportive supervisory relationships reduce the negative relationship between PCB and employee beliefs that the organisation values their contribution and cares about their well being”. The implication is that the construction of such positive relationships indicates that the organisation cares about its employees which could contribute to perceptions of a relational PC and a positive evaluation of the state of the PC. This is consistent with Parzefall and Coyle-Shapiro (2009) who found that management have a crucial role to play in helping employees to make sense of PCB. According to Thompson and Heron (2005: 399), organisations that develop “good quality employee-manager relationships will benefit from higher levels of employee commitment”. This suggests that managers can modify the detrimental

implications of a PCB and contribute to positive evaluations about the state of the PC.

The literature also identifies individual variables, including age, personality and ideology as potential moderators of the state of the PC. Research evidence suggests that older workers are more proficient at regulating their emotions after negative events compared with younger workers (Bal *et al*: 2008; Carstensen *et al*: 2003; Lockenhoff and Carstensen: 2004). Bal *et al* (2008) found that older workers reacted less emotionally to PCB than younger workers. Although Bal *et al* (2008) did not specify the ages which constitute older workers, the mean age of the sample at Tox Lab was 53.2 years which can be regarded as older workers. The research evidence suggests that the mature age profile of the sample could modify the state of the PC following a PCB and contribute to positive evaluations of the state of the PC.

As discussed in relation to the categorisation of the PC, Bunderson (2001) argues that the PC of professional employees is constructed from professional and administrative ideologies, with professional ideologies contributing to relational obligations and administrative ideologies contributing to transactional obligations. Bunderson (2001) argues that professional employees respond differently to breaches in transactional compared with relational obligations. Bunderson (2001) found that breaches of professional obligations were associated with reduced organisational commitment, satisfaction and productivity. According to Bunderson (2001), these outcomes were indicative of a withdrawal response, consistent with Tietz and Nadin (2011). Breaches of administrative obligations were associated with intention to quit and turnover which Bunderson (2001) argued to be indicative of an instrumental response, consistent with a transactional PC. This suggests that work ideologies can modify the state of the PC.

In summary, in relation to Literature Review Question (3), I have argued that the literature suggests that the implications of a WCD for the state of the PC during a WCP will be negative. I have critically analysed dominant approach to content studies which is to categorise obligations according to the transactional – relational

continuum and have highlighted research evidence which suggests that a relational PC is more desirable and therefore associated with a positive evaluation of the state of the PC. The literature assumes that a PCB will have detrimental implications for the state of the PC, contributing to a more transactional PC (Tietz and Nadin: 2011). However, I have suggested that this might not necessarily be the case due to the potential for a range of moderators to enhance perceptions of the state of the PC. This implies to me that the implications of a WCD for the state of the PC during a WCP might be more complex than that depicted by the literature.

**3.4 Literature Review Question (4): What does the literature depict as the possible outcomes of the PC during a WCP?**

In relation to Literature Review Questions (2) and (3), I discussed how the literature suggested that a WCD will be perceived as a PCB, with negative implications for the state. This section discusses how the literature depicts the relationship between PCB and outcomes as negative which implies that the WCD will have detrimental implications for both the state and outcomes of the PC. This is supported by Conway and Briner (2009: 97) who assert that “According to psychological contract theory, employee perceptions of psychological contract breach will result in negative outcomes for the employee and the organisation”. The main explanation presented in the literature for the relationship between PCB and outcomes is the norm of reciprocity although I highlight additional explanations which may be relevant to my Tox Lab study.

(i) Relationship between PCB and outcomes:

Zhao *et al*’s (2007: 669) contributed a comprehensive depiction of the relationship between PCB and outcomes through a meta-analysis. They found that PCB had a “significant impact on most work-related outcomes”. The key findings from Zhao *et al* (2007) are summarised in Figure 3.1 below:

Event	Mediators	Outcomes
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<b>PCB</b>	<b>Emotional responses:</b>  <b>Violation</b>  <b>Mistrust</b>	<b>Attitudinal consequences:</b>  <b>Job dissatisfaction</b>  <b>Reduced organisational commitment</b>  <b>Intention to quit</b>
		<b>Behavioural consequences:</b>  <b>Reduced OCB</b>  <b>Reduced in-role performance</b>

**Figure 3.1: The relationship between PCB and outcomes (adapted from Zhao et al, 2007)**

Figure 3.1. suggests that PCB is an event which will trigger emotional responses of violation (encompassing anger and frustration) and mistrust (incorporating employee cynicism towards organisational initiatives). This supports Morrison and Robinson's (1997) conceptual distinction between PCB and PCV. According to Figure 3.1. these emotional responses mediate the effects of PCB on the attitudinal and behavioural consequences. In the case of Tox Lab, if as the literature suggests, the WCD is perceived to be a PCB, and subsequently interpreted as a PCV, then this can be expected to provoke emotional distress and employee cynicism. These emotional responses to PCB will contribute to negative attitudes and behaviours as described in Figure 3.1. This suggests that at Tox Lab, the WCD will have negative consequences for emotions, attitudes and behaviours.

However, whilst Zhao *et al*'s (2007) meta analysis provides key evidence about the relationship between PCB and outcomes, there may be additional complexities and limitations to Zhao *et al* (2007) which need consideration. In particular, it is suggested that Zhao *et al*'s (2007) conceptualisation of key constructs is generic and risks over-simplifying the relationship between PCB and outcomes. This is particularly relevant to trust and organisational commitment.

Zhao *et al* (2007) provide a narrow conceptualisation of trust at the level of the employee towards the organisation. The implication of Figure 3.1 is that perceptions of PCB erode trust. However, there is research evidence which suggests that the relationship between PCB and trust may be more complex. Mather (2011) and Perry and Mankin (2007) provide a broader conceptualisation of trust. They found that employees had different levels of trust in different levels of management which suggests that a PCB may erode trust between employees and some managers, though not necessarily all managers. Worrall *et al* (2011: 31) found that employees in organisations which had undergone large scale organisational change “were significantly less likely to trust senior managers than respondents from organisations that had not undergone change”. Moreover, where redundancy is used as a means of implementing organisational change, it is associated with mistrust of senior managers by employees (Worrall *et al*, 2011). In the case of Tox Lab, this suggests that employees are likely to mistrust senior managers who were regarded as agents of the WCD but that trust may not necessarily be eroded between employees and managers *per se*.

There is also debate within the trust literature as to the prospects for restoring trust. Gillespe & Dietz (2009) argue that trust can be recovered through a trust repair process. However, there is limited empirical evidence of the successful application of the trust repair process and Worrall *et al* (2011) cast doubt on the feasibility of restoring trust. They claim “that there is an asymmetrical relationship between trust building and trust reduction in organizations in that it is easy to violate, damage and lose trust but it is difficult to build trust as trust can both evolve and dissolve as relationships change” (Worrall *et al*, 2011: 19). This suggests that trust may be difficult to restore in a WC context, regardless of the process adopted.

Interestingly, Buckley’s (2011) study casts doubt on the notion that trust and mistrust are diametrically opposed. Buckley (2011: 325) investigated the implications of downsizing on HR Manager’s trust and found that “seemingly contradictory feelings can be maintained at the same time, and that HR Managers may spend some time oscillating between trust and mistrust, in a state of differentiated trust, in the period directly after downsizing”. This suggests that the boundaries between trust and mistrust may be more fluid and variable during a

long-term WCP such as Tox Lab than suggested by Zhao *et al* (2007). Moreover, I suggest that the context of an animal research laboratory could have implications for the relationship between PCB and trust. The conduct of animal experiments in the UK is tightly regulated to ensure compliance with animal welfare legislation. In order to maintain the quality and integrity of the studies at Tox Lab for example, the animal areas were located behind barriers in order to ensure the safety and security of animal and technicians. This meant that animal technicians spent large amounts of their working time hidden from the direct observation of managers meaning that management had to trust technicians to perform and behave. This suggests that the animal research context may be conducive to trust between the parties.

In addition to trust between the parties, Sanders (2010: 245) suggests that employees engaged in 'Dirty Work', such as veterinary or animal technicians, construct supportive sub-cultures in order to compensate for the less appealing aspects of their work. Sanders (2010: 260) found that "Love for animals bound techs and other clinic workers together. This shared emotional experience provided the foundation for a cohesive and positive collective identity". These supportive sub cultures are conducive to employees trusting each other which suggests that trust could be lateral. This is supported by Maher (2011: 211) who refers to the logic of solidarity which she described as "the potential for high trust to emerge between workers in response to their subordinated position". It is plausible that the logic of solidarity was constructed from "involvement in stigmatized, dirty, emotionally troubling, or disreputable work activities" and that this logic of solidarity constructed high trust relationships between employees prior to the WCD (Sanders, 2010: 245). It is suggested that employees continued to be in a subordinated position during the WCP due to the power of management in a WC context (Wigblad and Lewin: undated; Cullinane and Dundon: 2011). Therefore, this subordinated position could have stimulated the logic of solidarity and lateral trust during the WCP. Thus, although Zhao *et al* (2007) associate PCB with mistrust, this could be an over-simplification and the implications of the WCD for trust might not be entirely detrimental across the multiple forms of trust.

Figure 3.1. indicates that PCB is associated with reduced organisational commitment. However, this global measure of commitment does not distinguish between the different dimensions of commitment (Meyer and Parfyonova: 2010). It is proposed that the WCD could have different implications for the different dimensions of commitment and it suggested that the adoption of a global measure of commitment can be misleading. There are three dimensions of commitment evident in the literature. Herscovitch and Meyer (2002: 475) describe Normative Commitment (NC) as “a sense of obligation to provide support for change”. Meyer and Parfyonova (2010) claim that NC is a neglected dimension of commitment and therefore, there is a lack of empirical evidence about the implications of PCB on this dimension. However, Meyer and Parfyonova (2010: 289) claim that “Employees with a relational contract are more likely to value the relationship for its own sake and experience a moral sense of duty to consider the organisation’s interests even when it requires personal sacrifice”. Based on Table 3.1, it was suggested that the Tox Lab PC was relational. This implies that employees could perceive an obligation to support the WCD and if this was the case, then there would not necessarily be a reduction in this dimension of commitment during the WCP. Therefore, is it possible that the WCD might not have detrimental implications for NC during the WCP.

A second dimension of commitment is identified by Meyer and Parfyonova (2010: 283) as Continuance Commitment (CC) which is defined as a “mind-set of cost-avoidance”. This is based on a recognition by employees of financial and social costs that they could jeopardise through a lack of CC. In the case of Tox Lab, employees faced financial costs if they left before their roles ceased to exist during the WCP because they would be treated as voluntary leavers and not eligible for substantial severance and pension benefits. This suggests that the possibility of inducing CC during the WCP through financial benefits which departs from the findings of Zhao *et al* (2007).

Affective Commitment (AC) is the third dimension of commitment and is described as a “mindset of desire” (Meyer and Parfyonova, 2010: 283). In view of the long service of the sample, it is plausible that employees would want to stay at Tox Lab. The WCD meant that the majority of employees were compulsory redundant but



as discussed in relation to interpretations of PCB, this might not be a desirable outcomes. But for the WCD, it is possible that employees would have intended to stay at Tox Lab and it is doubtful that the WCD would have destroyed that desire. This would suggest that the WCD might not have detrimental implications for AC; indeed it could intensify AC. Therefore, it is proposed that there is merit in adopting a more nuanced analysis of the commitment construct than the global measure adopted by Zhao *et al* (2007).

Zhao *et al* (2007) associated PCB with reduced in-role performance. However, the WC literature reports counter-intuitive findings of enhanced performance during a WCP which is contrary to Zhao *et al* (2007). Research evidence suggests that productivity gains may be available to organisations during the a WCP. This is based on a phenomenon which Bergman and Wigblad (1999) coined as the closedown effect. Wigblad *et al* (2012: 161) claim that “the closedown effect occurs when, without any change to capital investment, a productivity increase is observed during the closedown period”. Wigblad *et al* (2012) attribute this effect to shifting frontiers of control which they suggest are particularly likely to emerge during a long term WCP. This is potentially relevant to Tox Lab given the long-term nature of its WCP.

Wigblad *et al* (2012: 175) argue that that the following features are indicative of shifting frontiers of control and contribute to enhanced productivity during the workplace closure process:

- workers’ initiatives,
- improved informal leadership,
- self-organising work groups,
- deployed planning to lower levels of hierarchy,
- positive informal work practices,
- higher levels of involvements in decision making,

- managements no longer had demands for increased performance; and
- no future plans for investments or improvements.

This implies that a WC context can provide workers' with more control over the point of production, thereby shifting the balance of power in the employment relationship further towards workers. However, in contrast to Bergman and Wigblad's (1999) optimistic view of the unexpected power gains for workers during a closure process, Hansson and Wigblad (2006: 938) describe the closedown effect as a "pyrrhic victory for the workers in relation to the management, as the plant is finally shut down, no matter their efforts". This suggests that the balance of gains from any closedown effect may lie with management and that whilst employees may experience benefits due to the shifting frontier of control, these are likely to be short term. Nonetheless, this suggests a need for caution in assuming that the WCD will be associated with reduced in-role performance during a WCP due to the research evidence supporting a closedown effect.

Zhao *et al*'s (2007) findings are based on an assumption of a PC with a single organisation but as discussed in relation to Literature Review Question (1), this Tox Lab study will draw upon Marks' (2001) conceptualisation of multiple PCs, raising the possibility of employees perceiving distinct PCs with AgCo and Tox Lab. Marks (2001: 463) notes that there is a lack of empirical evidence on this matter but argues that based on the rule of proximity, "any violation of the contract between the employing organization and the employee potentially has minimal impact on attitudinal and behavioural outcomes". In the case of Tox Lab, this suggests that a violation of the AgCo PC would have limited consequences for outcomes due to low proximity. Marks (2001: 464) claims that "the more proximal, collective psychological contract that occurs in workgroups has a greater effect on employee behaviour than any other contract employees have with other organizational entities". This suggests that at Tox Lab, the lateral PCs will exert a stronger influence on the relationship between PCB and outcomes. This implies that a global investigation of the violation process is inappropriate because a violation in one PC could be mediated by fulfilment in another PC, suggesting that the negative relationship between PCB and outcomes cannot be assumed.

The dominant explanation within the literature for the relationship between PCB and outcomes is the norm of reciprocity. Conway and Briner (2009: 92) describe the norm of reciprocity in explaining that “the employer does something for the employee and the employee feels obliged to do something in return”. Coyle-Shapiro and Shore (2007: 13) assert that “the empirical evidence seems to support the idea that the parties in the employment relationship orient their action towards a general norm of reciprocity”. In the case of Tox Lab, this suggests that employees will reciprocate the treatment that they receive during a WCP. The WC literature suggests that a non-SR approach to WCP is dominant, entailing poor treatment of employees (Hansson and Wigblad: 2006). This implies that employees will reciprocate any such poor treatment during a WCP. Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000: 11) found that “employees targeted their reciprocity towards the source of the fulfilled or unfulfilled obligations”. In the case of Tox Lab, this suggests that if employees perceive that the organisation has not fulfilled its job security obligations then they will reciprocate with negative implications for the outcomes of the PC during the WCP. The implication arising from the literature is that negative reciprocity, targeted towards the organisation, is inevitable during the WCP.

However, once again, this assumes a single PC but the operation of the norm of reciprocity within multiple PCs could be more complex. For example, if reciprocity is targeted, and if employees perceived that the PCB occurred in the AgCo PC, then this would suggest that employees would target their reciprocity towards AgCo and its agents. This suggests that the implications of the PCB could vary across multiple PCs. Interestingly, Marks (2001) notes that there is a lack of empirical evidence as to whether violation operates independently across multiple PCs and is contained within a PC without a spillover into other PCs. If this Tox Lab study finds a perceptions of PCV within one PC then there is scope for this study to contribute empirical evidence about the operation of PCV across multiple PCs. In a rare study of the spillover effect, Conway *et al* (2014: 750) found that “employee’s reactions to widespread organisational change following austerity measures are not spilling over to affect targets beyond the perceived initiator of

breach”. This would suggest that there may not be a spillover effect across multiple PCs at Tox Lab.

Whilst the norm of reciprocity is the dominant explanation in the literature for the relationship between PCB and outcomes, Coyle-Shapiro and Shore (2007: 13) claim that there is an “over-emphasis given to the norm of reciprocity in employment relationship research”. Although there is some discussion within the literature about targeted reciprocity, this is a variation on the dominant explanatory variable rather than an alternative explanation. Coyle-Shapiro and Shore (2007: 16) call on researchers to “direct attention to non reciprocal mechanisms that may underpin the relationship”. They identify obedience as a norm which could influence a social exchange relationship. This could be relevant to the WC context where the literature suggests that employees have limited bargaining power (Cullinane and Dundon: 2011; 2006). Employees could feel that they are compelled to be obedient and to comply with their employer, particularly if there are inducements such as severance and pension benefits at stake. This suggests that although the literature presents the norm of reciprocity as the main explanation for the relationship between PCB and outcomes, alternative explanations may be available.

An alternative explanation for the outcomes of PCB which could be relevant to my study is the rule of proximity. Marks (2001: 463) contends that “the strength of ... [the psychological] contract is determined by proximity”. She argues that horizontal PCs have more impact on employees due to their proximity compared with distal PCs. However, my argument is that this conceptualisation can be developed further when considered in the context of WC. Consistent with Hardy’s (1985) definition of WC where a unit was closed whilst the organisation continued, my suggestion is that the WCD constructed two distinct organisations comprising of Tox Lab as the declining and dying workplace and AgCo as the continuing organisation. Drawing upon Marks’ (2001) conceptualisation of multiple PCs, it follows that employees could perceive PCs with both AgCo as the continuing organisation and Tox Lab as the closing workplace. Given employees’ proximity to Tox Lab and distance from AgCo (both geographically and in relation to its position on the organisational life cycle), it is possible that the Tox Lab PC had a stronger

impact on employees than the AgCo PC. This suggests to me that the surprisingly favourable outcomes of the PC during the WCP could potentially be explained by the rule of proximity. This will be investigated further in this Tox Lab study.

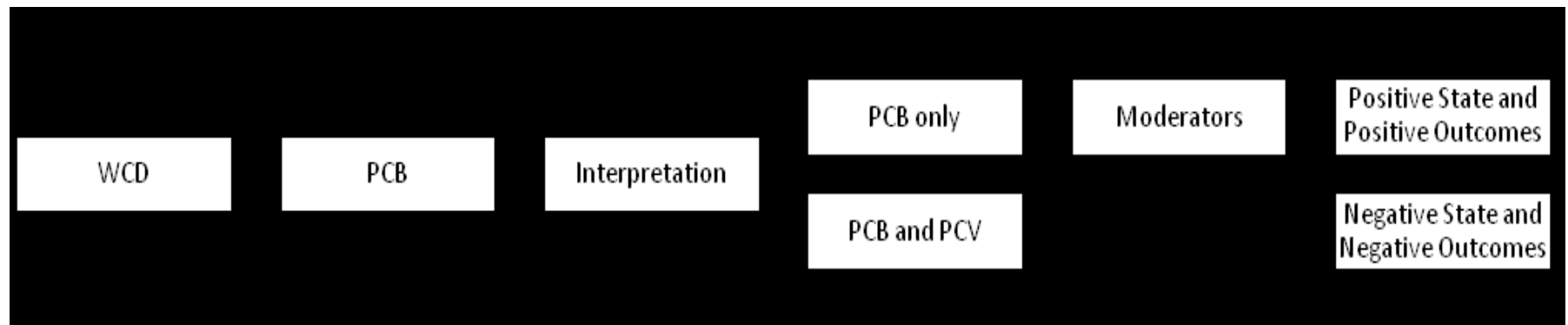
In summary, the literature depicts the outcomes of a PCB as negative. This implies to me that the implications of a WCD for the outcomes of the PC during a WCP will be negative attitudinal and behavioural consequences. However, this is based upon an assumption that a PCB will have had negative implications for the state of the PC, although as I discussed in relation to Literature Review Question (2), there is research evidence to suggest that the negative implications could be modified. If modification of the state of the PC was perceived then it is possible that the outcomes of the PC may not be as negative as depicted in the literature. Notwithstanding the possibility of modification, the dominant explanation in the literature for the negative outcomes of a PCB is the norm of reciprocity. However, this assumes a single PC which may not be applicable to the Tox Lab study due to the WCD which could construct multiple PCs. As yet, the implications of PCV across multiple PCs is under-researched and therefore it is unclear whether PCV is contained within a single PC or if there is a spillover effect across multiple PCs. This is the gap in the literature to which my Tox Lab study intends to contribute.

### **3.5 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I have critically analysed what the extant literature suggests about the PC concept, the possible interpretations of the WCD and the implications of the WCD for the state and outcomes of the PC during the WCP. I have argued that the dominant conceptualisation of the PC is too narrow for the purposes of this Tox Lab study due to its assumption of a single PC and its neglect of the organisational perspective which I regard as inconsistent with the context of a WCP. Instead, I have proposed a broader conceptualisation of the PC construct which draws upon Marks (2001) and Guest (2004). I have discussed how the literature suggests that the WCD will be perceived as a breach of job security obligations and how this research evidence indicates that this is likely to be interpreted as a PCV. I have highlighted how the literature depicts the implications of the WCD as negative for the state and outcomes of the PC during the WCP. With regards to the state of the

PC, the literature suggests that the PCB will trigger withdrawal responses, contributing to a transactional PC and negative evaluations of the state. However, I have argued that there may be scope to modify the negative implications for the state. In relation to the outcomes, I have discussed how the literature associates PCB with negative attitudinal and behavioural consequences, explained by the norm of reciprocity. However, I argued that this assumes that the implications of a PCB for the state of the PC will be negative, contributing to negative outcomes in a single PC. If multiple PCs are perceived then the literature is unclear about the implications of PCB across multiple PCs, though I propose that the rule of proximity may be a plausible explanation for the outcomes of the PC during a WCP.

In Figure 3.2 overleaf, I have presented the conceptual framework derived from this literature review which informs this Tox Lab study.



**Figure 3.2: Conceptual framework derived from the literature.**

### 4.1 Introduction

I designed this case study in order to understand and explain surprising observations and preliminary empirical findings at Tox Lab. The context for the surprise was the announcement of a Workplace Closure Decision (WCD) in September 2006. The timing of the WCD was earlier than expected by the Tox Lab employees yet surprisingly, both management and employees perceived that the WCD had limited detrimental implications for the Psychological Contract (PC) during the Workplace Closure Process (WCP). As I discussed in Chapter 3, this is contrary to PC theory that suggests that a WCD that culminates in job loss tends to be perceived to be a breach of promises made about job security and therefore interpreted as a Psychological Contract Breach (PCB) or Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) with entirely detrimental implications for the state and outcomes of the PC. I designed the research in order to investigate this surprise, as reflected in the following Research Aim:

To understand and explain the implications of the WCD for the PC during a WCP from the perspectives of management and employees.

In this chapter, I explain the research design, acknowledging its limitations, but demonstrating how the research has been carefully and robustly designed so as to make an interesting, authentic and practical contribution to knowledge of the implications of PCB and PCV during a WCP. I start the chapter with a discussion of the philosophical position that underpins the research process, before critically evaluating the methodology and methods.

### 4.2 Philosophical Approach

#### 4.2.1 Interpretative Paradigm

It is important to be transparent about my philosophical position because this shapes the research design and approach (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Indeed, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2010: 10) contend that “Interplay between philosophical ideas and



empirical work marks high quality social science research". My philosophical position can be contextualized within the research paradigms. Guba (1990: 17) explains that "The net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises may be termed a paradigm, or an interpretative framework, a basic set of beliefs." Lather (2006) identified the following four main paradigms:

1. Positivism (concerned with prediction);
2. Interpretivist (concerned with understanding);
3. Critical orientation (concerned with emancipations);
4. Poststructuralist (concerned with deconstruction).

This Tox Lab study was conducted within an interpretivist paradigm. This is evident in the purpose of the Tox Lab study, which seeks to understand what happened to the PC during a WCD. I did not assume a particular interpretation of the WCD but instead believed that the implications of the WCD for the PC were open to interpretation by the affected parties. On this basis, the WCD may, or may not, have been interpreted as a PCV and may, or may not, have been interpreted as having detrimental implications for the PC. I adopted Morrison and Robinson's (1997) model of PCV as an interpretive framework through which to understand the implications of a WCD for the PC. I propose that this is an appropriate model for this Tox Lab study because it recognises the interpretive nature of PCV. Morrison and Robinson (1997: 242) comment that perceptions of PCV "may emanate from an employee's interpretation of a contract breach and its accompanying circumstances. Morrison and Robinson's (1997) model is consistent with my interpretive paradigm.

Consistent with the interpretivist paradigm, I have adopted a subjectivist epistemological stance. Such a stance is particularly relevant to the PC construct due to its subjective nature (Conway and Briner, 2009). As Guest and Conway's (2002) definition indicates, the PC is constructed from the perceptions of the organisation and the individual about their promises and obligations to each other.

Consistent with Guest (2004), such perceptions are shaped by inputs including individual variables (including age, tenure and education), which will vary between individuals. Furthermore, the PC construct includes implicit promises and obligations (Meckler et al, 2003). Whilst it may be methodological convenient to move away from implicit to explicit promises in order to enable measurement and reduce ambiguity, this is, as Conway and Briner (2009: 18) comment “in many ways unfortunate, as the implicitness of a psychological contract is the main way in which it is distinctive from, say, legal and employment contracts’. The subjectivist epistemological stance enables an authentic investigation of the PC that celebrates rather than seeks to aggregate, its subjective nature. This stance is evident in Research Objective (2) that explores the subjective evaluation of the parties regarding the state of the PC during the WCP. As Conway and Briner (2009: 106) observe, the state “is in effect the individual’s subjective summation of all the events taking place” in the employment relationship.

Subjectivism views the research and participants as co-creators of the findings and is based upon the belief that knowledge is accumulated through vicarious experience. This is contingent upon a close relationship between the researcher and participants whereby the researcher can be considered as a passionate participant in the research process (Guba and Lincoln, 1999). In the case of this Tox Lab study, this close relationship was enabled through my close links with Tox Lab as a former employee. I was employed at Tox Lab before and during the WCP and had experience of the PC during the WCP. My contention is that this direct experience provided me with the contextual knowledge, rapport and empathy, which enabled the accumulation of knowledge through vicarious experience.

I acknowledge that my role as a former employee at Tox Lab could be construed as undermining the credibility of the findings due to the risk of “going native, namely being too close and essentially adopting the informant’s view (Gioia et al, 20012: 19). It could be assumed that I had a vested interest in the account of the PC which is presented. There is a danger that I could be seen as attempting to influence the process for gaining knowledge by perhaps selecting a sample that is intended to report a favourable experience of the PC during the WCP. This selection could be with the intention of illustrating and even exaggerating the success of the Human

resource Management policies and practices, which were used during the close process and ultimately to enhance my professional credibility and personal reputation. Conversely, there may be an argument that I sought to select and illustrate findings that presented a negative impact on the PC during the WCP, perhaps in an attempt to validate colleagues, or my own, feelings.

However, I contend that “We always occupy a certain position (as parents, as academics...), and this position colours our vision” (Timmermans and Tavery, 2012: 172). This suggests to me that the pursuit of value-neutral research in the social sciences is a difficult task that is not consistent with my philosophical stance. As Bluhm et al (2011: 1871) note, “it is impossible to remove oneself completely even from quantitative research, but the effort to do so is less prevalent in qualitative research”. Moreover, the challenge of reconciling my role as a former employee with demands for defensible conclusions is by no means unique to this Tox Lab study. Cassell (2005: 172) asserts that “the researcher is a key part of the research process and that the positivist ideas of the independent research is unattainable”. In the case of Tox Lab, my response to this challenge was to be guided by principles outlined by Patton (2015). Patton (15: 58) explains that “The neutral investigator enters the research arena with no axe to grind, not theory to prove (to test but not to prove), and no predetermined results to support. Rather, the investigator’s commitment is to understand the world as it unfolds, be true to complexities and multiple perspectives as they emerge, and be balanced in reporting both confirming and disconfirming evidence with regards to any conclusions offered”. Because I had moved away from Tox Lab into an academic career, I suggest that I was able to achieve the principles outlined by Patton (2015).

The subjectivist epistemology influenced the use of a qualitative methodology, designed around interactions between the researcher and participants. A qualitative methodology is consistent with early PC research, with Argyris (1960) and Levinson et al (1960) both adopting qualitative approaches to their research. A qualitative approach is appropriate for this Tox Lab study because it seeks to understand how the affected parties interpreted the WCD through the lens of the PC. Because of the surprising observations and preliminary empirical findings, it is not assumed that the WCD was interpreted as a PCV. Instead, it is suggested that the interpretation

and subsequent implications of the WCD for the PC are more complex than depicted by the literature. The surprising observations and findings which depart from conventional wisdom are regarded as symptomatic of the complexities and intricacies of the implications of a WCD for the PC, which risk being aggregated by quantitative approaches in pursuit of universal laws (Coyle-Shapiro and Parzefall, 2008; Conway and Briner, 2005). As Coyle-Shapiro and Parzefall (2008: 25) assert, “the use of qualitative methods and study designs may extend out understanding of exchange relationships and concurrently recognize that *relationships* are complicated”. The theoretical objectives of this Tox Lab study are to provide an alternative account of the implications of PCV that incorporated both management and employee perspectives and recognises the particular complications of employment relationships in the context of a long-term WCP. It is contended that a qualitative approach is more suited to this theoretical purpose because it is not testing hypotheses that reflect and potentially support conventional wisdom but instead enables the exploration of a surprise.

Whilst it is not assumed that the WCD will be interpreted as a PCV, it is recognised that this is one possible interpretation. In view of this possible interpretation, it is contended that a qualitative approach is appropriate for the emotional state of violation. Morrison and Robinson (1997: 230) assert that “the term violation conveys a strong emotional experience.” Whilst their model of PCV assumes a quantitative approach, they acknowledge, “Because violation is an emotional and multifaceted concept, traditional survey methods and quantitative analyses may not be able to adequately capture it” (Morrison and Robinson, 1997: 250). Therefore, I propose that a qualitative approach builds upon a quantitative approach for exploring any interpretations of the WCD. Moreover, this Tox Lab study seeks to investigate the PC in the context of the WCP based on the view that the PC is shaped by contexts. This is consistent with Atkinson (2008) and Guest (2004) who argued that organisational, individual and policy contexts were factors which influenced the state and outcomes of the PC. Such contextual influences are amenable to investigation through qualitative approaches as confirmed by Patton (2015: 9) who asserts that “qualitative inquiry makes attention to context a priority for both data collection and for reporting findings.”

In the process of investigating the PC in context and generating Research Objectives (an overview of the process for generating Research Objectives is presented in the forthcoming sections of this Chapter), I identified three under-researched areas. First, the WCD in the context of an animal facility laboratory is identified as an under-researched area, possibly due to access difficulties fuelled by security concerns (Holmberg and Ideland, 2012) and the contentious nature of animal experimentation, which is regarded as dirty work (Sanders, 2010). Second, whilst there is a growing body of literature that examines the implications of WC for productivity (Wigblad et al, 2012; Hansson and Wigblad, 2006), there is limited empirical evidence about the implications of WC for the PC. This is perhaps due again to access difficulties (Whetten, 1980) but also and assumption that a WCD will be interpreted as a PCV with entirely detrimental implications, which signal the immediate and terminal decline of the PC, rendering the need for research redundant. Third, there is limited empirical evidence on the organisation's perspective on the PC due to the dominant conceptualisation at the level of the individual (Rousseau, 1990). This study conceptualises the PC at the level of the relationship between the individual and the organisations/its agents (Guest, 2004). This necessitated the exploration of the organisation's perspective using senior management as an organisational proxy. In view of these three under-researched areas, it is argued that a qualitative approach is appropriate for this Tox Lab study because, as Bluhm et al (2011) argue, qualitative research is suited to under-researched areas. Moreover, Grandy et al (2014) suggest that qualitative methodologies are appropriate for undertaking research into stigmatized occupations, which underlines their suitability for the context of an animal research laboratory.

Despite my strong rationale for adopting a qualitative methodology, I recognise that quantitative methodology have dominated contemporary PC research. Adopting a qualitative approach therefore positions this Tox Lab study on the methodological edge of the dominant paradigm. Conway and Briner (2009: 73) note that contemporary PC research has "generated a large number (around 100) of mainly quantitative empirical studies". However, the dominance of quantitative studies is challenged by Taylor and Tekleab (2004: 279) who contended, "with more than a little exasperation, that much psychological contract research seems to have fallen into a methodological rut". Thus, this Tox Lab study responds to calls in the literature

for more variation in research designs (Conway and Briner, 2009) and seeks consistency with the broader field of management research.

In summary, this research is designed around an interpretive paradigm. This is evident in the Research Aim, which is to understand a surprising interpretation of the implications of a WCD for the PC. Consistent with relativist ontology, I am not seeking a definitive account about how the WCD was interpreted and its implications for the PC, but instead am interested in multiple perspectives and different interpretations from management and employees who were affected by the WCD. I assert that these multiple perspectives and different interpretations can be obtained through a close relationship with the participants, guided by the principle of empathetic neutrality and enabled by my former employment at Tox Lab. Moreover, I adopted a qualitative approach in order to understand surprise of a potentially emotional nature, within its contexts, which are under-researched.

Next, I present and discuss the process for generating the research questions and research objectives.

#### **4.3 Research Questions**

Alvesson and Sandberg (2011) identify two main approaches to constructing research questions, namely gap spotting and problematizing. Gap spotting is described as the dominant approach, which aims “to identify or create gaps in existing literature that need to be filled” (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2011: 247). Research questions are constructed with the purpose of filling the identified gaps. In contrast, a problematizing approach is based upon “identifying and challenging assumptions underlying existing theories” (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2011: 247). Research questions are constructed with the purpose of challenging the consensus. These approaches tend to be depicted as mutually exclusive in the literature, although Alvesson and Sandberg (2011: 266) conclude that “combinations of various elements/tactics for selectively building upon and partially problematizing established literature by challenging its underlying assumptions are probably more productive than ‘purist’ approaches.” In the case of this Tox Lab study, I combined

a problematization approach with a gap spotting approach, because they were inextricably lined and therefore more effective than a single approach. This resulted in broad research questions being developed (problematizing), which then shaped the literature search and review. From this a gap spotting approach helped to develop the specific research objectives.

The broad research questions that shaped the literature search were:

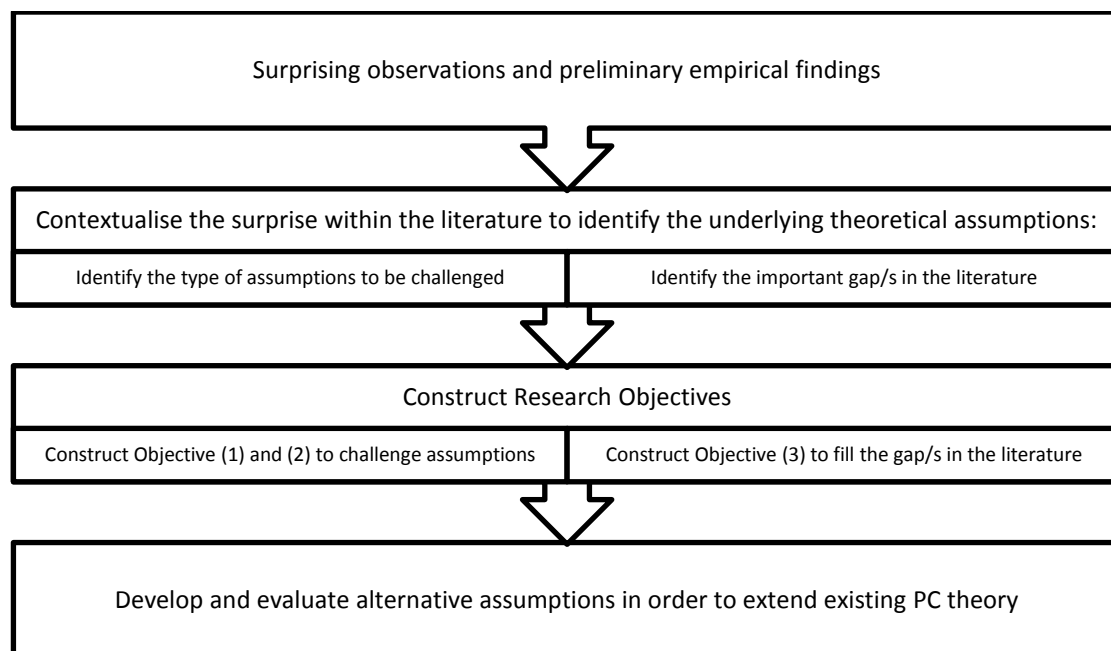
1. How is the PC conceptualised in the literature?
2. How does the literature suggest that a WCD will be interpreted through the lens of the PC (for example, as a PCB or PCV)?
3. What does the literature suggest to be the implications of a WCD, particularly if it interpreted as a PCB or PCV? And
4. What does the literature depict as the possible outcomes of the PC during a WCP?

#### **4.4 Research Objectives**

Alvesson and Sandberg (2011: 256) propose the following process for generating research objectives based on a problematizing approach.

1. Approach the domain of literature for assumption challenging investigations;
2. Identify the underlying assumptions of the literature;
3. Evaluate if the identified assumptions merit problematization;
4. Develop an alternative assumption;
5. Consider assumptions in relation to the audience; and
6. Evaluate alternative assumptions.

It is notable that Alvesson and Sandberg (2011) acknowledge that problematizing and gap-spotting approaches are not mutually exclusive, yet depict them as distinct processes. This tension is addressed with my approach to constructing research objectives for this Tox Lab study which is summarized below:



**Figure 4.1: A summary of my process for generating research objectives**

As I indicate in Figure 4.1, the process for constructing research objectives began with surprising observations and preliminary empirical findings that the WCD did not have entirely negative consequences for the PC during the WCP. This is contrary to PC theory, which assumes that job loss will be perceived as a breach and/or violation of the PC with entirely detrimental implications for the state and outcomes of the PC. In the process of contextualising the surprise within the PC theory, two gaps were identified. First, the dominant conceptualisation of the PC is at the level of the employee meaning that the perspective of the organisation and its agents is neglected (Coyle-Shapiro and Parzefall, 2008; Nadin and Cassell, 2007; Taylor and Tekleab, 2004; Guest, 2004). Indeed, Nadin and Cassell (2007: 422) describe the employer as the “largely silent partner in the psychological contract relationship”. This Tox Lab study adopts Guest’s (2004) conceptualisation of the PC at the level of the relationship between the employee and the organisation/its agents. An understanding of the perspective of the organisation/its agents is an integral part of this Tox Lab study. There are few empirical studies which investigate the



organisation's perspective on violation of the PC (examples include Guest and Conway, 2000; Kessler and Coyle-Shapiro, 1998; Tsui et al, 1997). Moreover, there is a lack of empirical evidence on the organisation's and employee's perspectives (notable exceptions include Dick, 2006; Tekleab and Taylor, 2003; Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2002). This is a gap that merits further investigation because, according to Taylor and Tekleab (2004), it is the most important priority of PC research. This is supported by Nadin and Williams (2012: 111); they assert that "the organisation, or its agents, are an essential party to any psychological contract, and understanding their perspective is crucial if the explanatory potential of the psychological contract is to be realised." As I discussed in Chapter 3, the perspectives of senior management are investigated as agents of the organisation.

The second gap in the PC literature is that the consequences of violation of the PC are under-researched in comparison with PCB (Coyle-Shapiro and Parzefall, 2008). This is inconsistent with Morrison and Robinson's (1997) conceptual distinction between a breach and violation of the PC, which is the conceptual framework for this study and therefore a gap which merits being addressed within this Tox Lab study. The process adopted in this Tox Lab case study for constructing research objectives challenges the assumption that a problematization and gap-spotting approach are distinct and instead suggests that they are integrated and complimentary.

Alvesson and Sandberg (2011) claim that a problematizing approach contributes to more interesting and influential theories compared with the dominant gap-spotting approach. The inclusion of the problematizing approach in this Tox Lab study is intended to contribute interesting theories about the implications of breach and violation for the PC compared with conventional wisdom, which depicts the implications as entirely detrimental. However, according to Alvesson and Sandberg's (2011) typology, challenging the assumption that a breach or violation has entirely detrimental implications for the PC can be categorised as challenging an in-house assumption. This challenge is considered to hold the least depth and scope in comparison with other assumptions that are open to challenge. An advantage of this is that such a challenge is less contentious and therefore possibly more likely to be considered rather than dismissed as a result of upsetting dominant

groups (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2011). However, there is a risk that the less contentious nature will limit the potential influence and interestingness of contributions. As discussed in relation to the criteria for evaluating this case study, the inclusion of the 'interestingness' criteria is intended to address this limitation.

In addition to the problematization of the implications of PCB/PCV for the PC during a WCP, the inclusion of the perspective of agents of the organisation is identified as an important gap to fill. This Tox Lab study adopts Morrison and Robinson's (1997) theoretical model of Psychological Contract Violation (PCV). Morrison and Robinson (1997: 249) recognise that "Consistent with the psychological contract literature, we have focused on employee perception of contract breach" and state "it is important to recognise, however, that agents of the organisation will have their own interpretations of the situation, which we have not addressed". The interpretation by organisational agents of PCV in the context of a WCP is the gap that this study seeks to fill. This is proposed to be an important gap to fill in order to be consistent with the conceptualisation of the PC at the level of the relationship between parties (Guest, 2004). However, by applying Morrison and Robinson's (1997) model to investigate the perspectives of organisational agents, there is a risk of reproducing the same knowledge albeit from a different perspective. In order to address this potential limitation, Morrison and Robinson's (1997) model is used as an organising framework rather than rigidly as a checklist in order to allow for alternative interpretations to be investigated.

In summary, I used a problematizing and gap spotting approach in order to first develop broad research questions, review further literature and then develop specific research objectives. Having discussed the process for developing research questions and presenting these, I next discuss the research strategy adopted for the study and demonstrate how it linked to the research objectives.

#### **4.5 Research Strategy**

A case study is the preferred research strategy for this Tox Lab study. Yin (2009: 18) defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary

phenomenon in depth and within its real life context". I acknowledge that the case study is not the dominant research strategy within the PC literature. According to Conway and Briner (2005), some 90% of empirical studies in the field rely upon questionnaire surveys as their research strategy. However, Conway and Briner (2009: 107) later conclude "the common approach of using surveys is fundamentally inappropriate to examining psychological contracts". Moreover, the case study is popular in contemporary PC research (e.g. Tietz and Nadin, 2011; Parzefall, 2012; Atkinson, 2007 & 2008; Dick, 2010 & 2006). The Tox Lab study draws upon this tradition of case study research in the field, but is distinctive in its qualitative exploration of multiple perspectives on the complexity of the PC during a WCP. My argument is that the case study is an appropriate research strategy for the examination of the PC for two key reasons.

Firstly, as alluded to by Yin (2009), the case study research strategy enables in-depth exploration. This is appropriate for this Tox Lab study because the surprising findings and preliminary empirical observations require in-depth investigation in order to enhance understanding and thus address the research aim. I suggest that the in-depth investigation enabled by a case study research strategy constructs a foundation for alternative casing. PC theory suggests that the WCD at Tox Lab should be a case of PCV and the terminal decline of the PC from the perspective of employees (Conway and Briner: 2009). In contrast to conventional wisdom, my initial observations suggest a more complex case with different perspectives between the parties and overall a less negative view of the state and outcomes of the PC during the WCP than that depicted in the literature. The case study research strategy enables the in-depth exploration of this alternative casing because, as Lauckmer et al (2012) assert, the case study enables the exploration of complex situations and multiple perspectives.

Second, as alluded to by Yin (2009), the case study research strategy enables context-oriented research which is particularly pertinent to this Tox Lab study, which explores the PC in the contexts of a WCP in an animal facility laboratory. Consistent with Atkinson (2008) and Guest (2004), I argue that contexts are factors which influence perspectives on the PC during the WCP. Therefore, a case study research strategy, particularly situated at the level of the organisation as in the case of Tox

Lab, is appropriate because it enables an exploration of the particular context of Tox Lab that are believed to be necessary for understanding and therefore addressing the research objectives. This is supported by Gibbert et al (2008) who confirm “case studies seek to study phenomena in their contexts, rather than independent of context”. My argument is that the case study is an appropriate research strategy for this surprising and contextual investigation of the PC.

#### **4.6 Sampling**

The aim of this research is to gain an in-depth understanding of the implications of a WCD for the PC from the perspectives of management (as agents of the organisation) and employees. I adopted a purposeful sampling strategy in order to address this research aim, and to make full use of my personal contacts to aid access. Patton (2015: 264) describes purposeful sampling as the selection of “information-rich cases... from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry”. This purposeful sampling strategy is evident in the selection of the case study organisation and research participants as discussed below.

The case of Tox Lab was predominantly selected because the WCD had been announced during my employment. I was granted organisational access through the WCP, although employed in academia for the majority of the time and thought-out the data collection phase. This access enabled me to collect data to illuminate the research aim. Thus, Tox Lab can be regarded as what Stake (1995) describes as an intrinsic case with high relevance to the research aim. The unit of analysis was management and employees, in order to address the research aims and objectives. All of the research participants were affected by the WCD and experienced the PCB during the WCP and were therefore able to provide interpretations and perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP. This is what Patton (2015: 261) describes as a “people focused” unit of analysis.

Tox Lab had a population of 300 employees, and the sample size for this study was 26 research participants (see Appendix A1 Table of Participants). The purpose of

this sample size was to collect sufficient data to illuminate the research objectives. This contrasts with quantitative sampling where the purpose may be ensuring representativeness and enabling generalisations to be made (Patton, 2015). Notwithstanding the purpose of the sample size, it compares favourably with other relevant qualitative PC samples which are of a smaller size (Tietz and Nadin: 2011; Parzefall: 2012; Bligh and Carsten: 2005). It is also consistent with Mason (2010) whose analysis found that the median sample size was 28. The 26 participants enabled me to collect data from both senior managers and employees because each of my three Research Objectives address management and employee perspectives. My initial plan was to conduct 30 interviews of 1 hour duration in order to exceed Mason's (2010) median sample size of 28 and based on an assumption that this would yield sufficient data to enable me to address the Research Objectives. Once I began the data collection process, I noted that for the most part, the duration of my interviews exceeded 1 hour. On completion, I identified that the interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 3.5 hours with an average of approximately 2 hours. This duration of interview provided such a depth of discussion and quality of insights that sample size became less of a concern. This is consistent with Morse (2000: 4) who observed that the "greater the amount of useable data obtained from each person ... the fewer the number of participants". This flexibility, to shift from my initial plan to interview 30 participants to drawing upon 26 interviews, reflects the emergent nature of qualitative research.

As well as the quality of insights, the sample size was also informed by the principle of data saturation. Lincoln and Guba (1985: 202) observe that when "the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming. I reached saturation point in this Tox Lab study after 20 interviews. However, I had already arranged the remaining 6 interviews within the original timeframe for data collection and was interested in the perspectives of the participants and so I continued to collect data. I then had the opportunity to interview redeployment consultants (Career Change Consultants or CCCs) about their perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. I chose to conduct these interviews but viewed these participants as external to the WCP at Tox Lab. As discussed within Chapter 5, because the CCCs were engaged by the organisation to provide redeployment support during the WCP, they are regarded as a subset of the agents of AgCo. They are expected to support the

perspectives and actions of the organisation that has commissioned their services and therefore there data is drawn upon as and when applicable to support the findings from the agents of AgCo.

#### 4.6.1 Characteristics of the sample

The characteristics of the sample are consistent with the characteristics of the population available at the time of data collection; that is a diverse sample comprising of people who were managers and employees, leavers, survivors and both leavers and survivors of the WCD. The sample comprised a high proportion of the populations available to me at the time of data collection as detailed below and provided a plentiful amount of rich, interesting and relevant data that enabled me to address the Research Objectives.

The WCD was announced in September 2006 and at this time, the Tox Lab population consisted of 9 managers and 245 employees. Data collection was undertaken in April 2010 which was during the final stages of the WCP, by which time the majority of people had left Tox Lab. The implications of this time-lag between the start of the WCP and the time when data collection was undertaken is explored further below. However, with regards to the characteristics of the sample, there were four populations available to me from which to collect data in April 2010. These four populations are described below in Table 4.1.

	Population 1	Population 2	Population 3	Population 4
Name	Last leavers from Tox Lab	AgCo survivors	AgCo survivors and leavers	Leavers from Tox Lab
Description	Still on the payroll but working notice or in redeployment.  Due to leave for reason of redundancy within 3 months.	Survivors of the WCD.  Part of the new organisation in AgCo South.	Survived the WCD.  Became part of the new organisation at AgCo South from January 2007	Left Tox Lab due to WCD for reason of redundancy between January 2007 and April 2010

	Or external redeployment consultants	Still employed by AgCo.	Subsequently left AgCo for reason of retirement or new job	Retired or moved to new jobs
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*Table 4.1: Populations available at the time of data collection*

The sampling criteria for the research participants were threefold. First, they had to have been predominantly based at Tox Lab (at least prior to the announcement of the WCD) in a management or employee capacity in order to have direct experience of the implications of a WCD for the PC during the WCP. Twenty two participants meet this criterion and data from the remaining 4 participants (Interviewee numbers 23-26 who were external redeployment consultants) was used to provide contextual information and support the findings from the agents of AgCo.

Second, the research participants who held a management role needed to be part of the senior management team in order to be considered as an agent of the organization and able to contribute an organizational perspective. Six senior managers met this criterion and of these six, Interviewee 1, 2 and 4 can be regarded as key informants. Interviewee 1 was the Director of Tox Lab and Interviewee 2 was his deputy. Interviewee 4 was the Director of Tox Lab during the WCP. Patton (2015: 284) describes key informants as “a prized group” which suggests to me that their inclusion is a strength of my sample. At Tox Lab, Interviewee 1 and 2 were agents of the WCD because they made and communicated the WCD to the relevant employees in various locations, whilst Interviewee 4 was an agent of the PC during the WCP. These key informants can also be regarded as elite interviewees. Elites are described as “individuals in positions of power and influence” (Marshall and Rossman, 2011: 155). The advantage of these elite interviews is that these participants were involved in key strategic decisions regarding the WCD and WCP up to two years before the general announcement of the WCD was communicated to the Tox Lab employees. This level of involvement provided insights into the rationale and decision-making process for the WCD which is outside of the knowledge of the workforce and therefore adds interest to the findings.

The third criterion for inclusion in the sample was that the research participants needed to be still employed by AgCo or alternatively, within twelve months of their leaving date at the time of interview. This is informed by Foddy's (1993: 92) assertion that "memory for salient events has been found to be satisfactory for up to one year". As alluded to above, this will be discussed further below in relation to the time-lag between the announcement of the WCD and the time of data collection.

The four populations that were available to me in April 2010 when data collection was undertaken are summarised along with their key characteristics in Table 4.2 below:

	<b>Population 1</b>	<b>Population 2</b>	<b>Population 3</b>	<b>Population 4</b>
<b>Name</b>	Last leavers from Tox Lab	AgCo survivors	AgCo survivors & leavers	Leavers from Tox Lab
<b>Population size</b>	8	11	4	10
<b>Managers or employees?</b>	1 x Manager 3 x Employees 4 x Redeployment consultants	3 x Managers 8 x Employees	2 x Managers 2 x Employees	1 x Manager 9 x Employees
<b>Sample size</b>	8	4	4	10
<b>Employment status</b>	Leavers & external consultants	Survivors	Survivors & Leavers	Leavers
<b>Gender</b>	Male & female	All male	Male & female	Male & female
<b>Managers or Employees?</b>	1 x Manager 3 x Employees 4 x Redeployment consultants	2 x Managers 2 x Employees	2 x Managers 2 x Employees	1 x Manager 9 x Employees



<b>Age range</b>	40-65	40-55	40-65	40-65
<b>Tenure (years)</b>	12-25+	25-37	20-35	15-30
<b>Interviewee numbers</b>	4,14,18,20,23-26	2,6,10,11	1,3,7,15	5,8,11-17,19,21,22

*Table 4.2: An overview of the sample and its key characteristics*

AgCo provided me with organisational access to conduct interviews with participants in April 2010. This meant that Populations 1 and 2 were accessible to me because they were still within AgCo and they were directly contactable through organisational email systems. In order to gain access to Population 1, I explained to the Director of Tox Lab the research that I was undertaking and invited her to participate. She agreed to participate and agreed to share information about the study with people who remained at Tox Lab and to ask them if they were willing to participate. As depicted in Table 4.2, the population size was 8 and all 8 people volunteered to participate in my study. Of these 8 participants, four met the sampling criteria. The remaining four from Population 1 were external redeployment consultants and so did not directly meet all elements of the sampling criteria. However, they had spoken on numerous occasions to all Tox Lab employees affected by the decision including those who left for reason of redundancy at the start of the WCP in January 2007 and could provide interesting and relevant insights, albeit in support of the findings from the agents of AgCo. Therefore, these four redeployment consultants were included within the sample meaning that everyone who volunteered to participate from Population 1 was included in the sample.

In order to gain access to Population 2, I contacted the senior manager of the new organisation at AgCo South who had been part of the Tox Lab Senior Management Team prior to the announcement of the WCD and adopted the same approach outlined above in relation to Population 1. He agreed to participate and shared information about the study with his colleagues, asking them to contact me directly if they wanted to volunteer to participate. As presented in Table 4.1. the size of Population 2 was 11 and 4 people volunteered to participate in my study. All four people met the sampling criteria and they were included in the sample. Although

this sample constituted a smaller proportion of Population 2 (compared to the sample of a 100% of Population 1), this was not perceived to be a cause for concern because the people within Population 2 had survived the WCD and moved from Tox Lab within the first year of the WCP to work for AgCo South and therefore their insights in relation to Research Objectives (2) and (3) had some limitations due to their limited direct experience of the WCP.

Populations 3 and 4 were not as readily accessible as Populations 1 and 2 because they comprised of people who were no longer with AgCo. In order to gain access to these populations, I enlisted the help of the Director of Tox Lab who posted information about my research project on a facebook page which had been constructed for current and former employees of Tox Lab. This facebook post asked for volunteers to participate in the study to contact me directly. Those volunteers were categorised into two populations comprising of Population 3 who had survived the WCD, moved to work with the new organisation at AgCo South but then subsequently left AgCo for retirement or a new job. There were four volunteers in Population 3, all four of them met the sampling criteria and they were all included in the sample. Finally, the remaining volunteers were categorised as Population 4. These were people who had remained at Tox Lab during the WCP and left for the reason of redundancy at various stages of the WCP and either retired or moved to new jobs. The majority of these volunteers had left within 12 months of the time of data collection in April 2010. There were exceptions but these were included on the basis that they had ongoing links with ex-Tox Lab employees (e.g. Interviewee 5 who set up an organisation with ex-Tox Lab employees) or they had particularly interesting insights to consider (e.g. Interviewee 19 had been the staff committee representative and been party to discussions about the WCD prior to its announcement in September 2010). Ten volunteers from Population 4 agreed to participate in the study and all ten volunteers were included in the sample because they met the criteria or met most aspects of the criteria and were able to offer interesting perspectives on the Research Objectives.

Table 4.2 above provides an overview of the characteristics of the sample including whether participants were categorised as management or employees and whether they were leavers, survivors or survivors and leavers. Table 4.3 below summarises

the characteristics of the sample in comparison with the populations which were available to me at the time of data collection in April 2010:

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Sample</b>
<b>Managers</b>	7	6 (86%)
<b>Employees</b>	22	16 (73%)
<b>External redeployment consultants</b>	4	4 (100%)
<b>Leavers</b>	14	14 (100%)
<b>Survivors</b>	11	4 (36%)
<b>Survivors and Leavers</b>	4	4 (100%)

*Table 4.3: Summary of the key characteristics of the sample in comparison with the population*

Table 4.3 illustrates that the sample is reasonably balanced between management and employees which enables the Research Objectives to be addressed in view of the reference to the perspectives of both parties. Moreover, Table 4.3 indicates that leavers are more dominant within the sample compared with survivors. This strong leaver characteristic needs to be considered when interpreting the findings as it could mean that the accounts reflect the more negative perceptions that a leaver might have after being made redundant from an organisation where they had spent a large amount of their working life. This emphasises the importance of contextualising the findings within the perspective of redundant workers in order to allow for the possibility that negative perceptions could reflect feelings of frustration towards the WCP.

However, as discussed within Section 4.7.1, this study adopts a localist perspective on the research interview which recognises the political nature of the interview process and acknowledges the particular risk of senior managers using the research

interview to defend the WCD and their treatment of employee during the WCP. The characteristics presented in Table 4.3 suggest that managers may seek to present the organisation and themselves as its agents in a favourable way whilst employees may seek to present themselves as the victims of a flawed decision. Consistent with a subjectivist epistemology, it is not the intention of this study to identify a definitive version of the truth but instead to understand and explain the implications of a WCD for the PC from these different perspectives, being sensitive to the characteristics of the sample and the implications that this might have for a more or less favourable viewpoint articulated in their version of reality.

Table 4.4 below summarises the overall characteristics of the sample:

All Sample	Average Age (yrs)	Average Annual Salary	Length Service (yrs)
<b>M = 13</b>	M = 56.04	M = £55,873	M = 27.4 yrs
<b>F = 14</b>	F = 50.4	F = £38,383	F = 19.2 yrs
<b>N = 27</b>	All = 53.2 N = 24	All = £47,128	All = 23.7 yrs

*Table 4.4: Descriptive statistics of the sample*

Table 4.4 illustrates that the typical characteristics of the sample are long serving, highly paid mature employees. As discussed in Chapter 2, I suggest that the characteristics of the sample shaped perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC. Further details about the sample are presented in the Table of Participants (Appendix A1).

A strength of the sample is that the typical characteristics could modify or exacerbate any detrimental implications of a WCD for the PC. For example, the mature age, long service and high pay has favourable implications for pension and severance benefits. Moreover, the professional background of the sample may have enhanced their prospects on the labour market, thereby moderator the potentially detrimental implications of the WCD for their future employability. Conversely, the long service and mature age profile of the sample could have exacerbated the

implications of the WCD due to their emotional attachment to Tox Lab and lack of desire and confidence to enter the labour market. This highlights the subjective nature of the research process and undermines any attempts to predict the findings, thereby justifying the data collection.

In summary, the sample is diverse and is consistent with the characteristics of the population available at the time of data collection. The sample has been constructed with the purpose of illuminating the perspectives of different parties on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP. I acknowledge that the characteristics of the sample influence the research participant's perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP. Whilst the characteristics of the sample could be said to explain the surprising perception of limited detrimental implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP, they could equally be claimed to exacerbate any detrimental implications. This highlights to me the importance of a subjectivist research design.

Next, I discuss the data collection methods.

## **4.7 Data Collection Methods**

### **4.7.1 Interview data**

Consistent with the interpretative paradigm and subjectivist epistemology, I have used interviews as my main method of data collection. The interpretative basis of interviews is confirmed by Cassell (2005: 176) who comments that "the interview is actually an interpretive process". Interviews are appropriate for exploring perspectives on the implications of a WCD for the PC because of the emotional nature of the event for participants which may or may not be interpreted as a PCV. This is supported by Morrison and Robinson (1997: 250) who assert that in-depth interviews may be particularly appropriate for capturing the "emotional and multifaceted concept" of violation which underlines their appropriateness for this Tox Lab study. I propose that individual rather than group interviews enable the in-depth exploration of emotional issues such as job loss, because as DiCiccio-Bloom and Crabtree (2006: 315) observe, the "individual in-depth interview allows the

interviewer to delve deeply into social and personal matters, whereas the group interview allows interviewers to get a wide range of experience, but because of the public nature of the process, prevents delving as deeply into the individual". Moreover, Bluhm *et al* (2011) found that interviews were the most popular data collection method in qualitative research. Interviews are also prevalent in PC research and on this basis I propose that they are a relevant and credible data collection method for this Tox Lab study (Tietz and Nadin: 2011; Atkinson: 2007; 2008; Parzefall: 2012; Dick: 2010; 2006; Bligh and Carsten: 2005).

Alvesson (2003) identifies two dominant perspectives on interviews. First, the neopositivist perspective which aim "to establish a context-free truth about reality 'out there' through following a research protocol and getting responses relevant to it, minimizing researcher influence and other sources of bias" (Alvesson, 2003: 15). This perspective is inconsistent with the interpretative paradigm which underpins this Tox Lab study because rather than seeking to eradicate contextual influences, I suggest that the contexts of a WCP in an animal facility laboratory shapes perceptions of the PC (Guest: 2004). Moreover, whilst the neopositivist perspective regards interview data as a vehicle for establishing a definitive factual account of the implications of a WCD for the PC during a WCP, my contention is that there are multiple realities and that the interview data is one of a number of accounts constructed from a particular interpretation from an individual. Furthermore, I argue that the researcher is an integral part of the research process, rendering attempts to remove researcher bias fruitless. My critique of the neopositivist perspective on interviews is supported by Fontana and Frey (2000: 663) who state that "we cannot lift the results of interviewing out of the contexts in which they were gathered and claim them as objective data with no strings attached".

The second dominant perspective on interviews is the romantic perspective (Alvesson: 2003). This perspective aims to "explore the inner world (meaning, ideas, feelings, intentions) or experienced social reality of the interviewee" (Alvesson, 2003: 16). In contrast to the neopositivist perspective, establishing close rapport and empathy with interview participants is regarded as an enabler of these insights. This perspective assumes that the interview context will ensure that the interviewee "is a competent and moral truth teller, acting in the service of science and producing the

data needed to reveal his or her 'interior' (i.e. experiences, feelings and values)", (Alvesson, 2003: 14). This implies to me that interviewing can provide access to the internal reality of participants which they will willingly share with a researcher subject to the use of appropriate interview techniques. The notion that participants will respond to an interview context by willingly sharing their inner worlds with researchers, who may be relative strangers, risks simplifying and idealizing the interview situation.

In view of these critiques of the dominant neopositivist and romanticist perspectives on interviews, I have adopted a localist position for my study. The localist perspective is based on "understanding interviews in a social context, instead of treating it as a tool for collecting data in isolation" (Qu and Dumay, 2011: 242). This implies that "an interview is an empirical situation that can be studied as such" (Alvesson, 2003: 16). In the context of the Tox Lab study, this suggests to me that the interviews are embedded within the context of the WCP and subject to the same individual, organizational and external influences that pervade the PC construct. My proposal is that interviews are a "complex social phenomena" (Alvesson, 2003: 31).

In accordance with the localist perspective on interviews, Alvesson (2003) highlights the issues of political interest which may pervade the interviews with key informants and suggest limitations to their accounts. Alvesson (2003: 22) suggests that "actors may use interviews for the own political purposes. They may cheat or lie or they may very well tell the (partial) truth as they know it but in, for them, selective and favourable ways". This is a particular risk in interviewing senior management at Tox Lab. As Alvesson (2003: 22) notes, "A habitual acting so that one cannot be tied to expressing dangerous opinions or indiscretion becomes part of the stuff making up managers". This suggests to me that the accounts of Interviewees 1,2 and 4 as elite interviews in particular, could be constructed to defend the actions of the organization and to present the WCD and its implications in a selective and favourable light. Alvesson (2003: 22) argues that "It seems unlikely that interviewing – whatever the tricks used – manages to fully break this habit". Therefore, I suggest that the interviews with management and Interviewee 1, 2 and 4 in particular, are constructions for critical scrutiny due to their political interests and expressions of

corporate realities. This highlights the importance of analyzing them in conjunction with employee perspectives as I have done in this Tox Lab study.

I conducted semi-structured interviews in order to achieve a balance between seeking a consensus view consistent with a relativist ontology whilst retaining the flexibility to explore different interpretations and perspectives between participants. Qu and Dumay (2011) observe that the semi-structured interview is consistent with the localist perspective on interviewing, compared with structured interviews which they associate with the romantic perspective. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 3.5 hours and provided in-depth insights into how the participants perceived the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP. DiCiccio-Bloom and Crabtree (2006: 315) assert that “semi-structured in-depth interviews are the most widely used format for qualitative research”, which suggests to me that they are a credible choice for my study.

The participants were given the option to choose the location for the interview. I undertook the majority of interviews in offices close to the Tox Lab facility. The advantage of this location was that it positioned the research within its natural setting which is appropriate for the case study research strategy (Yin: 2009). However, some participants had not returned to Tox Lab since their leave date and some participants commented on the emotional nature of their return. This could have been considered a limitation of the data collection method within an objectivist epistemology but from a subjectivist perspective, it is regarded as part of the context which shapes the perspective of the participants. Other interview locations were chosen by the research participants based on geographical convenience. For example, Interviewees 2 and 13 had moved away from the north west region and so I travelled to locations which were convenient to them. The various locations in which the interviews were undertaken are summarised within the Table of Participants (Appendix A1).

The interviews in this Tox Lab study were based on an interview guide which was constructed to gather data on the research questions (see Appendix A3). The interview guide provides a framework for the interview. McCracken (1998: 37)



explains that “the investigator has a rough travel itinerary with which to negotiate the interview. It does not specify what will happen at every stage of the journey, how long each lay-over will last, or where the investigator will be at any given moment, but it does establish a clear sense of the direction of the journey and the ground it will eventually cover”. In the case of my study, the interview guide provided me with an organising framework which helped me to structure the data collection and analysis. The interview guide was initially derived from the literature and subsequently used flexibly rather than mechanistically to explore individual perceptions and experiences of the impact of the WCD for the PC. Such flexibility was informed by DiCiccio-Bloom and Crabtree (2006: 316) who state that “the interviewer should be prepared to depart from the planned itinerary during the interview because digressions can be very productive as they follow the interviewee's interest and knowledge”. Such flexibility was important for this Tox Lab study due to the differing perspectives between management and employees which is elaborated upon in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

The interview guide was piloted with a subset of four interviewees from the main sample in order to explore its effectiveness. This preliminary study yielded meaningful data from all four interviewees which confirmed its appropriateness. Only minor amendments were made to the phrasing of certain sentences. Whilst interviews are identified as an appropriate and credible method of data collection for this Tox Lab study, they have limitations as discussed earlier in this section. Notably, Alvesson(2003) highlights how interviews can be conceptualized as an exercise in impression management. Alvesson (2003: 21) suggests that people may experience “a moral imperative to express oneself in loyal terms. This does not preclude critique but may still mean some. Possibly nonconscious, holding back and an inclination not to break taboos”. In view of the long service of the Tox Lab sample, it is plausible that all interviewees may feel obliged to express their loyalty to the organisation during the research interview and to present both themselves and Tox Lab in a favourable light. This could contribute to favourable accounts of the implications of the WCD for the PC which highlights the importance of situating the interviews within their contexts and treating them with a healthy degree of scepticism rather than uncritically as the truth including comparing interview accounts in order to identify inconsistencies and contradictions.

#### 4.7.2 Timing of interview data collection

There was a time lag between the start of the WCP in September 2006 and April and May 2010 when data collection was undertaken. I was employed as a HR Business Partner for AgCo until August 2008 and started this study in September 2009. I secured organisational access at a very early stage of my research process and this was possible because I had maintained organisational links which enabled the access, because I had a clear idea of what I wanted to investigate and because the last leavers were due to leave Tox Lab in summer 2010 and therefore I wanted to collect data before all potential participants had dispersed from Tox Lab. I was not in a position to collect real-time data from an earlier point in the WCP because I did not start my academic career until after I had left AgCo.

The main methodological issue raised by the time lag between the start of the WCP and the time of data collection is that in the intervening period, some participants had moved jobs, retired and relocated to AgCo South. It is possible that participants might have forgotten details, overlooked information and selectively recalled their version of events. This could undermine the accuracy and richness of the data, although Foddy's (1993) assertion about the salience of memory for one year suggests that there may be limits to this. Moreover, we cannot assume that the collection of data in real time would have yielded more accurate and richer data. Participants could have still forgotten details, overlooked information and selectively recalled events even if data had been collected in real-time. It is possible that participants might have recalled more intricate details which were pertinent at the time and subsequently became less pertinent but the Research Objectives are interested in global assessments of the implications of a WCD for the state and outcomes of the PC. The Research Objectives were not an attempt to re-construct a detailed temporal understanding of the implications of the WCD for the PC. Moreover, it is contended that the time lag provided participants with the benefit of time to reflect and make sense of their experiences, perceptions and perspectives. This benefit of a time lag for sensemaking is supported by Helms Mills *et al* (2010: 185) who assert that "sensemaking is retrospective". Therefore, the time lag supports this sensemaking process, thereby adding to the richness of the data collected.

#### 4.7.3 Documentary data

Although interviews were my main data collection method, this was supported by documentary evidence. The use of documentation provides written and visual data which is intended to complement the interview data. Flick (2009: 258) suggests that researchers "construct a corpus of documents". In this case, a preliminary corpus of documents was constructed including HRM policies, severance-related letters, copies of power point slides used in the announcement of the WCD and subsequent briefing sessions, and budgetary documents detailing the financial costs of the WCP. This documentary data provided supplementary insights into the organisational perspective to be considered in conjunction with the interviews with senior management. The documentary data also provided important contextual information relating to inputs into the state and outcomes of the PC during the WCP. They were particularly useful in outlining the deal which was introduced during the WCP. This is discussed further in Chapter 4.

Next I discuss the data analysis strategy.

#### 4.8 Data analysis

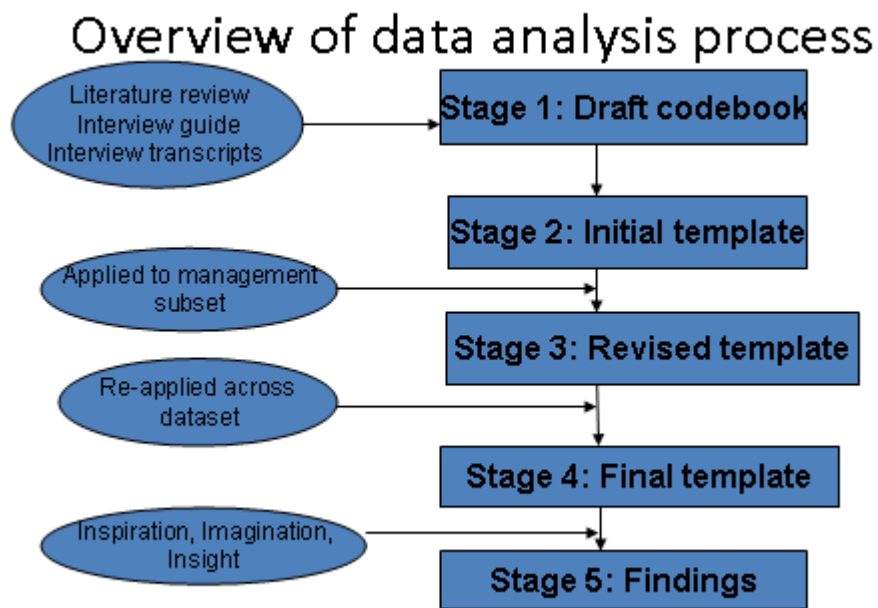
An abductive approach was adopted to data analysis (Peirce: 1903). Timmermans and Tavory (2012: 170) describe abduction as "a creative inferential process aimed at producing new hypotheses and theories based on surprising research evidence". Abduction is appropriate for this Tox Lab study given the surprising observations and preliminary empirical findings which were contrary to PC theory and merit alternative casing which can be constructed through an abductive approach. Moreover, abduction is consistent with the problematizing approach to generating Research Objectives because it seeks to challenge assumptions of PC theory and contribute interesting alternative theoretical insights. The starting point for the data analysis was therefore the surprise and I moved backwards and forwards between the literature, data and analysis in order to explain the surprise and contribute alternative casing about the implications of PCV. In the case of Tox Lab. Abduction started with the surprising observations and empirical findings that the implications of the WCD were not entirely detrimental. It then constructed reasons for this

surprise informed by the literature, data and its analysis. This is consistent with Van Maanen (2007: 1149) who comments that "abduction begins with an unmet expectation and works backwards to invent a plausible world or a theory that would make the surprise meaningful". Abduction differs from induction in that engagement with the literature is required in order to identify and understand surprising findings. This is supported by Timmermans and Tavory (2012: 173) who state that "Unanticipated and surprising observations are strategic in the sense that they depend on a theoretically sensitized observer who recognises their potential relevance". An abductive approach was adopted throughout the research process to allow for emergent surprises and insights. This was enabled by the flexibility of a qualitative research design.

Following Timmermans and Tavory (2012), an abductive approach entailed revisiting the data, defamiliarisation and the construction of alternative casing. The following sections discuss how template analysis was adopted in order to revisit the data and how the use of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) enabled the process of defamiliarisation. King (1998: 118) explains that "the researcher produces a list of codes (a template) representing themes identified in their textual data. Some of these will usually be defined a priori, but they will be modified and added to as the researcher reads and interprets the texts". Template analysis is a popular technique in contemporary PC research and therefore credible for this Tox Lab study (examples of studies using template analysis include Tietz and Nadin: 2011; Atkinson: 2007; Cassell *et al*: 2002; Nadin and Cassell: 2007; Parzefal: 2012; Dick: 2010; Nadin and Williams: 2012). Particularly salient for this Tox Lab study, King (2004: 257) claims that template analysis "works particularly well when the aim is to compare the perspectives of different groups of staff within a specific context". As evident in Research Objective (3) this Tox Lab study investigated and compared the perspectives of management and employees and template analysis was selected as an analytical technique to support this.

#### 4.8.1 Data analysis process

The data analysis process consisted of five stages as summarised in Table 4.5 below:



*Table 4.5: Overview of the data analysis process*

As depicted in Table 4.5 above, the data analysis process comprised of five stages. First, the literature review, interview guide and interview transcripts were analysed in order to construct a draft codebook which identified preliminary themes of relevance to the Research Objectives. The draft codebook is presented in Appendix A4. This draft codebook identified topic areas which were broad in scope and these were refined through a process of interpretation into an initial template which was the second stage of the data analysis process. Following King (1998), the initial template was constructed on the basis of the interview guide. In total, four levels of codes were constructed with Level 1 codes being broad areas of central importance to the study, derived from section headings in the interview guide. There were five Level 1 codes in the initial template and these were subdivided into Level 2, 3 and 4 codes which required a deeper level of analysis. The content of the initial template was checked against the Research Aim and Objectives in order to ensure relevance. The initial template is presented in Appendix A5.

The third stage of the data analysis process was to apply the initial template to a small subset of the data. I applied the template to the management data first because this comprised six interviewees which was a large enough number to highlight areas for refinement but manageable enough to gain familiarity prior to applying it to the larger set of employee interview transcripts. What became evident in the application of the initial template to the small subset of data was that whilst the participants covered the key points included in the interview guide, they tended to recount their stories of the WCP. This data was relevant, interesting and merited description which was possible through mapping interviewee's perspectives on and experiences of the WCP against the interview guide. However, in addition to this description, the data needed interpretation in order to reflect its richness. This entailed drawing out key themes from across the data set into a revised template. For example, Morrison and Robinson's (1997) model of PCV became increasingly relevant once it was evident that employees interpreted the WCD as a PCV. Therefore, the scope of the codes was revised in order to reflect the increasing importance of this model. The revised template is presented in Appendix A6. This revised template was then re-applied across the full dataset in order to investigate employee and managers' perceptions in line with the Research Aim. Following recommendations from King (2004: 263), the full dataset was "read through - and the coding scrutinized - at least twice" before the coding was considered to be final. This is consistent with the abductive approach which advocates revisiting the data. The final template is presented in Appendix A7.

As depicted in Table 4.5, the leap from the final template in Stage 4 to the findings Stage 5 was enabled by inspiration, imagination and insight. This transition from Stages 4 to 5 is consistent with Langley (1999: 707) who argues that "there will always be an uncodifiable creative leap". This does not undermine the rigor of the data analysis process. The research process entails choices relating to the design and execution of studies. This encompasses the philosophical approach, methods, analysis techniques, theoretical lenses and the phenomenon itself. Some of these choices I made in a logical and rational way, balancing practicality against the needs of the project. The selection of a cross-sectional design, sample selection and number of interviews are examples of this. However, other aspects relied much more on instinct and it is argued that both structure and inspiration are essential for credible and interesting findings. Weick (1989) argues that within qualitative

research there is always an uncodifiable step that requires creativity and imagination. Wolcott (1994) refers to these aspects as creativity and imagination and claims that they are distinct, with one relating to analysis and the other relating to interpretation. I have described the process I adopted and the rigour of analysis. This is evident in the various iterations of the templates. However, there were also moments of insight derived from reflections and discussions. Langley (1999) describes this stage as 'inspiration', which in the case of my study, was driven by the data, my own experiences, prior knowledge, common sense, contrasting interpretations and creativity. Such inspiration underpins the process of data interpretation and selection and explains the gap between the rigorous analysis evident in the final template and the complexity of the findings. This is supported by Langley (1999: 708) who argues that "we just do not know and cannot tell where that critical insight came from".

NVivo is a type of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) that was used in this study and supported the abductive approach of defamiliarisation. NVivo is an established tool for QDA in PC research (used by Atkinson: 2007; Parzefal1: 2012 for example). Yet its use remains contentious (Lee and Fielding: 1991) which is perhaps surprising given the way that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has permeated the contemporary world including workplaces. As ACAI (2009: 6) observe, the "use of the internet and social media has grown substantially over the last decade, and the use of these new web-based technologies for work related activities has been a major part of that". The use of CAQDAS is contentious in relation to this Tox Lab study because it is potentially inconsistent with the interpretative paradigm.

Roberts and Wilson (2002) argue that there is a disconnect between the philosophy underpinning ICT and qualitative research. They claim that ICT is underpinned by a positivist philosophy which is more suited to a quantitative approach which prioritise aggregating, quantifying and categorizing data in the pursuit of a definitive account. In contrast, this Tox Lab study is underpinned by an interpretativist philosophy, which is interested in ambiguities, inconsistencies, different interpretations and multiple realities which risk being aggregated, lost and possibly distorted through rigid coding and categorisation of data. This concern is expressed by Roberts and

Wilson (2002:2) who contend that "The data are fuzzy, with slippery boundaries between meanings, and not ideally suited to categorisation and classification using digitally based software. Employing a digital tool of this type on qualitative data has the potential to distort any understanding arrived at". In view of these philosophical inconsistencies, CAQDAS has been adopted with caution in this study.

I selected NVivo because it is the standard university software package which makes it accessible with technical support available. I undertook training on the use of NVivo which was valuable in emphasizing at an early stage of the research process that CAQDAS did not perform the analysis for me and that the I remained responsible for the data analysis (Denzin and Lincoln: 2005). The training also included practical application of the software as recommended by Blank (2004). In addition, I sought advice from more experienced colleagues who were familiar with NVivo. This ensured that I was aware of the possible uses of NVivo and could make informed choices about appropriate use for this study

First and foremost, I have used NVivo as a tool to assist with the data management and analysis because data collected included over thirty hours of interviews "which if not properly managed, can result in 'data overload ' with the researcher drowning in the data" (Kelle, 1995: 4). I opted for data management through NVivo in preference to manual data management as a process for managing the volume of data from this study. Such use of CAQDAS for data management purposes is its least contentious function, with consensus in the literature that CAQDAS is an effective data management tool (Dolan and Ayland: 2001; Atherton and Eslmore: 2007; Luge and Godoy: 2008). As Baugh *et al* (2010: 71) comment, "Appropriate usage of CAQDAS can then free the researcher from the burden of managing the raw data and allow him or her time to delve into the data and observe emergent themes and patterns as they develop". I imported the interview transcriptions into NVivo and I used it to code the data, write memos, identify themes and provide easy retrieval of interview quotes to substantiate the findings.

I recognise that CAQDAS has limitations. Interestingly, Fielding and Lee (1998) identify a concern amongst researchers using CAQDAS that they feel distant from



the data due to the mechanistic nature of the process compared with paper based analysis. Morrison and Noir(1998) and Webb(1999) claim that reading the data on a screen can distance and alienate the researcher from the data. With the explosion of web-based technologies, it is suggested that people are more au fait with reading and working with data on computer screens and therefore this may be less of a barrier than it was in 1998/9. It could also be said to idealise the manual process of handling data based on the assumption that not using computers will automatically draw the researcher closer to their data. However, this potential for distance from the data is regarded as a strength for this Tox Lab study because it is consistent with the abductive approach which advocates defamiliarisation. NVivo is regarded as enabling the defamiliarisation process. In the case of Tox Lab, the perspectives of the organisation and employees were under investigation and I revisited the management data first and then distanced myself from it whilst revisiting the employee data, all the while drawing on the relevant literature.

Another concern about the use of CAQDAS identified by Roberts and Wilson(2002) is the risk of de-contextualising the data. By the time data are coded, categorised and potentially viewed in conjunction with other data sharing the same codes, the data tends to be aggregated and subsequently interpreted out of its context. Alvesson and Gabriel (2013: 249) attribute the decontextualisation to the coding process, arguing that "The near-universal norms of coding decontextualize empirical material and attribute to it objectivity, unity and homogeneity that it rarely possesses". This is a pertinent concern for the Tox Lab study because contexts are regarded as an input into the state and outcomes of the PC (Guest: 2004). However, an advantage of NVivo over other software packages is that you can view coded data within its original context as well as with other segments sharing the same code.

Furthermore, in accordance with the subjective ontology underpinning of this study, I was seeking consensus views rather than definitive accounts and NVivo can enable the construction of a consensus view due to its propensity for aggregation. However, in order to address salient concerns about decontextualisation, I took steps to recontextualise the data after the coding process. Whilst this was time consuming, I considered it to be important in view of the role of contexts and feasible

in view of the time saved through the data management function of NVivo. Therefore, I accept that the use of NVivo has limitations but argue that there are valuable benefits relating to data management. Moreover, I argue that the limitations have some advantages for this Tox Lab study and that they can be carefully managed. Thus, NVivo is regarded as "just a tool for analysis, and good qualitative analysis still relies on good analytical work by a careful human researcher, in the same way that good writing is not guaranteed by the use of a word processor" (Gibbs *et al.*: 2002).

This supported the construction of alternative casing. So whereas conventional wisdom suggests that the Tox Lab study would be a case of PCV and the terminal decline of the PC during the WCP, the movement between data, analysis and literature constructed a more complex and not entirely detrimental casing of the implications of the WCD for the PC. This was by no means a neat and linear process but rather entailed "many more dead ends and false starts than good ideas" (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012: 180). However, I regarded such dead ends and false starts as part of the research puzzle which enabled me to refine a range of possible alternative casings for the surprise at the heart of the Tox Lab case study. Consistent with the interpretative paradigm, the alternative casing is not proposed to be the definitive truth about the implications of WCD for the PC but rather it is proposed to be an interesting and plausible interpretation based on logical inferences.

Next, I discuss the criteria for evaluating the Tox Lab study.

#### 4.9 Evaluation criteria

There is a lack of consensus in the literature about the criteria for evaluating qualitative research. Pratt (2008: 494) comments that "qualitative research lacks common evaluative standards". This lack of consensus relates to whether there should be any evaluation criteria, if they should be universal or paradigm-specific, and what they might entail. Guba and Lincoln (2005) argue that the development of universal criteria is problematic. However, as Tracy (2010) observes, critiques of criteriology tend to conclude by offering an alternative to the dominant positivist

criteria centred on reliability and validity (e.g. Brochner: 2000; Schwandt: 1996). Tracy (2010: 838) asserts that "criteria, quite simply, are useful. Rules and guidelines help us learn, practice and perfect". Tracy's (2010) belief in the usefulness of criteria is adopted for this Tox Lab study leading to the pertinent question of the construction of appropriate evaluation criteria.

In some instances, attempts have been made to fill the space by evaluating qualitative research according to the traditional positivist criteria of reliability and validity. Gibbert *et al* (2008: 1473) found that reliability and validity were widely adopted, reporting that "we failed to identify in our sample a single case study that used, and explicitly reported, rigor criteria other than the [positivist] validity and reliability notions". Yin (2014: 45) exemplifies the adoption of positivist criteria in proposing the evaluation of case studies according to construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. However, this adoption of positivistic evaluation criteria is generally regarded as inappropriate for qualitative research (Pratt: 2008; Amis and Silk: 2008). In Guba and Lincoln's (2005: 202) eyes, this is akin to "Catholic questions directed to a Methodist audience". In the case of this Tox Lab study, it would entail evaluating the reliability and validity of inherently subjective interpretations. My argument is that the positivist criteria of reliability and validity are inappropriate for evaluating this Tox Lab study.

There is evidence within the literature of the development of paradigm-specific evaluation criteria (Cunliffe: 2011; Creswell: 2007; Guba and Lincoln: 2005). Amis and Silk (2008: 457), for example, argue that "research quality [is] inseparable from the ontological and epistemological foundations of the research project". This suggests that what constitutes quality research needs to be consistent with the interpretative paradigm of this Tox Lab study. However, this potentially leads to paradigmatic entrenchment and division within qualitative research which is not necessarily conducive to constructing a coherent and credible community of qualitative research. This has led to researchers such as Amis and Silk (2008:466) contending that "questions of quality must be reframed".

Tracy (2010: 839) proposes criteria for evaluating qualitative research which is driven by a belief that "qualitative researchers can agree on common markers of goodness without tying these markers to specific paradigmatic practices or crafts". Tracy (2010: 839) suggests that quality in qualitative research is underpinned by the following eight criteria:

1. Worthy topic;
2. Rich rigor;
3. Sincerity ;
4. Credibility ;
5. Resonance;
6. Significant contribution;
7. Ethics; and
8. Meaningful coherence.

I adopt this criteria for this Tox Lab study because it provides a basis for constructing quality criteria which are relevant to qualitative research and can be loosely applied but yet provide a relevant alternative to the positivist criteria of reliability and validity.

I propose that this Tox Lab study meets the requirements of Tracy's (2010) eight criteria. First, this Tox Lab study is a worthy of investigation because is it based around surprising findings. Tracey (2010: 841) comments that "worthy studies are interesting and point out surprises - issues that shake readers from their common-sense assumptions and practices". In the case of Tox Lab, the preliminary empirical observations and findings suggest that the implications of the WCD were not entirely detrimental for the PC. This is counter-intuitive and contrary to PC theory which suggests that job loss is interpreted as a PCV with entirely detrimental implications for the PC. These surprising findings make the Tox Lab study interesting, theoretically compelling and therefore a worthy topic.

In relation to the second criteria of rich rigor, Tracy (2010: 841) suggests that this can be achieved through a wide range of "theoretical constructs, data sources, contexts and samples". This Tox Lab study meets the criteria of rich rigor by drawing upon different conceptualisations of the PC construct (particularly Rousseau: 1989 and Guest: 2004) and multiple theoretical frameworks for the PC (with particular reference to Guest: 2004 and Morrison and Robinson: 1997). It is constructed from over 30 hours of interview data supported by company documentation in order to collect sufficient data to address the Research Objectives. The transcription of the interviews indicates the depth of discussions.

The detailed discussion of data analysis in the earlier sections of this chapter provides a clear overview of how I shaped the data into findings. The key role of contexts (namely a WCP in an animal facility laboratory) particularly in shaping the state and outcomes of the PC during the WCP has been emphasised throughout this study and is evident in the dedication of Chapter 2 to presenting the case study context. A distinguishing feature of the sample is that it comprises of dual perspectives (management as agents of the organisation and employees) which contrasts with the majority of Rousseau (1989) inspired research which investigates the employee perspective. These features of the research design contribute to rich rigor.

With regards to sincerity, Tracy (2010: 841) explains that this "means that the research is marked by honesty and transparency about the researcher's biases, goals, and foibles as well as about how these played a role in the methods, joys and mistakes of the research". Tracy's (2010) conceptualization of sincerity corresponds to what Alvesson (2003: 25) describes as "a researcher self-focused type of reflexivity". Alvesson (2003: 25) cautions that a risk with this type of reflexivity is that researchers may be inclined "to give a cleansing account of their positions, preconceptions and interests". It is questionable whether this type of reflexivity would enhance the quality of this Tox Lab study and therefore Alvesson's (2003: 25) definition is preferred whereby "Reflexivity means working with multiple interpretations in order to steer clear of traps and / or to produce rich and varied results". This has been achieved in this Tox Lab study through the investigation of both the organisation and employee perspectives in order to explore different

interpretations of the implications of the WCD for the PC. Furthermore, the problematizing approach to the construction of Research Objectives and the abductive analytical strategy are evidence of attempts to challenge the underlying assumptions of PC theory and to construct alternative casing of the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP.

This Tox Lab study meets Tracy's (2010) criteria of credibility through the use of thick description and dual perspectives. Thick description is achieved through the inclusion of the case study context in Chapter 2 and the detailed presentation of the findings in Chapters 5 and 6. Moreover, I constructed the findings by listening to the voices of both the agents of the organisation and the WCD and the employees affected by the WCD to try to capture the complexities and different perspectives. I offered each interviewee the option of reviewing their interview transcript in order to provide feedback and to add any additional reflections. This was not with an intention of verifying the truth of their data, but consistent with an interpretative paradigm. It was an opportunity for interviewees to reflect on their interpretations. However, none of the interviewees wanted to do this and commented that they trusted the researcher.

Tracy (2010: 844) defines resonance as "practices that will promote empathy, identification and reverberation of the research by readers who have no direct experience of the topic discussed". In this Tox Lab study, the researcher has tried to make the research resonate with the reader by conducting more interviews with employees than management in order to provide insights into the perspectives of those affected by the WCD rather than solely the perspectives of agents of the WCD. Furthermore, salient extracts from interview data were carefully selected which capture the sense of devastation and sadness that was expressed in response to the WCD in order to promote resonance.

This Tox Lab study meets the criteria of significant contribution through its theoretical, empirical, methodological and policy contributions as summarised below. The theoretical contributions are derived from the extension of Morrison and Robinson's (1997) model of PCV in the following two key areas:

- through the addition and integration of the organisation's perspective alongside the employee's perspective; and
- through the extension of the interpretation of PCV to consider the implications.

Through the application of this extension of Morrison and Robinson's (1997) model, this Tox Lab study challenges PC theory which assumes that job loss is interpreted as a PCV with entirely detrimental implications for the PC. With regards to empirical contributions, this Tox Lab study provides empirical data on a WCP in an animal facility laboratory, both of which are under-researched contexts due to access difficulties. It has methodological significance due to its qualitative approach to investigating the PC which contrasts with the dominant quantitative approach. Moreover, it has implications for policy and practice at AgCo regarding the potential benefits and challenges of investing in the PC during any subsequent WCP

This Tox Lab study meets Tracy's (2010) criteria of ethical quality through the careful use of thorough procedures, prioritising the principle of relational ethics and advanced planning of the exit strategy. The salient procedures related to gaining informed consent, avoiding deception and providing confidentiality. In the case of Tox Lab, I invited interviewees to participate in the study and people who were interested in participating contacted the researcher directly so that they were volunteering. At the start of each interview the researcher checked that the interviewee was aware of the study being undertaking and where requested, I provided an overview of what was being done, why, how and when so that individuals could make informed choices about their ongoing participation. I also confirmed that the interview data would be anonymised. This was particularly important in the case of Tox Lab due to the controversial nature of animal testing within the UK. I was anxious not to do anything which would put at risk the security of the interviewees and the organisation more broadly. Therefore, each interviewee was assigned a number and they are referred to as Interviewee 1-27 within the Results Chapters. Tox Lab and AgCo are pseudo names designed to protect the organisation's identity.

Prioritising the ethic of care was important during the interview process in particular when the emotional nature of the subject matter for the interviewees was recognised. This was evident in tears from interviewees and I was sensitive to this and provided the interviewee with time and space during the interview process to regain their composure before asking them if they wanted to continue with the interview. It is possible that such emotional reactions prevented me from delving more deeply into a particular area of questioning but this was regarded as evidence of situational ethics where I decided that the ends did not justify the means and the care for the interviewee outweighed the possible insights available for further exploration of sensitive areas. I had developed good working relationships with the interviewees during my employment at Tox Lab and this was afforded primacy over the pursuit of a particular point in accordance with the principle of relational ethics.

I achieved exiting ethics through advanced planning of my departure from the field. I had identified a three month time period for data collection and arranged the interviews within this time period. The three month time period coincided with the final three months that Tox Lab employees were in redeployment before they all left. During this time frame, the small group of remaining employees were situated in an office on the site of Tox Lab which provided a central location from which to conduct data collection. The completion of data collection coincided with these employees exiting the Tox Lab site and therefore exiting the research scene was smooth and mutually convenient. At the start of the project, I offered to make the thesis or a summary of the key findings available to interested parties. This was in 2010 and since then, the majority of interviewees have retired or moved to alternative employment. However, I has contact details for a number of the interviewees and will use these to offer to share the findings.

#### **4.10 Chapter Summary**

In this Chapter, I have outlined the how the research has been carefully design in order to understand and explain surprising observations and preliminary empirical findings at Tox Lab. I have discussed the appropriateness of my interpretivist paradigm for the perceptual nature of the PC and explained how this is consistent with my interest in different perspectives and multiple interpretations. I have



described how I started the research process with broad research questions which informed my literature search and enabled me construct specific research objectives. I discussed how I adopted a qualitative case study approach in order to address my research objectives, drawing upon a robust sample of managers and employees for semi-structured interviews which I conducted until the point of data saturation. I have explained that I have interviewed key informants but I recognize that, in accordance with a localist perspective on interviews, senior managers could use the research interview to defend the WCD and present their contributions to the WCP in a favourable way. I have outlined how I have adopted an abductive analytical strategy in order to construct a consensus view of understanding and explanation of the surprising observations and preliminary empirical findings at Tox Lab, loosely drawing upon template analysis to assist with the data analysis process. I have discussed how I used NVivo as a data management tool and emphasized the ways in which a quality criteria has been embedded into the research design.

In the next chapter, I present the findings from the different groups of interviewees in relation to each of the Research Objectives.

## 5 Findings in relation to Research Objective (1)

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### 5.1 Introduction

The findings from the different groups of interviewees are presented in relation to each of the three Research Objectives stated below:

#### **Research Objectives:**

1. To understand and explain how management and employees interpreted the WCD, for example, as a breach of the PC (PCB) and / or violation of the PC (PCV);
2. To critically analyse management and employee perspectives on the state of the PC during a WCP, particularly in the light of any perceptions of PCB and interpretations of PCV; and
3. To evaluate management and employee perspectives on the outcomes of the PC during a WCP.

The findings in relation to each of the Research Objectives are discussed in depth within three separate chapters. This chapter analyses the findings from different groups of interviewees in relation to Research Objective (1). The management perspective is constructed from interviews with six senior managers who perceived themselves, and were perceived by others, as organisational agents. Their perspectives can be considered as proxy for the organisational perspective with regards to the PC (Guest and Conway: 2002; Lester *et al*: 2000; Shore and Tetrick: 1994). However, during analysis of the interview data, it became apparent that management was not a homogenous group. This is supported by Interviewee 4 who confirmed that there was “a very clear divide in the management team”. The implication of this divide is that there is not a clearly discernible single management perspective, but instead, a number of interpretations about the implications of the WCD for the PC which merit investigation. Whilst all six senior managers perceived themselves, and were perceived by others, to be organisational agents, I contend that they perceived themselves to be agents of different organisations which shaped their perspectives.

In order to reflect these management perceptions, I have constructed the following management categories in order to more clearly distinguish between the findings from different groups of management:

Management category	Interviewee
AgCo agents	1,2,3,6
Tox Lab agents	4,5

*Table 5.1: Composition of different management groups*

As presented in Table 5.1, Interviewee 1, 2, 3 and 6 were categorised as AgCo agents because they perceived themselves and were perceived by others as agents of AgCo, the WCD and the AgCo PC. As indicated in Table 5.1, Interviewees 4 and

5 were categorised as Tox Lab agents because they perceived themselves and were perceived by others to be agents of Tox Lab and the WCP and the Tox Lab PC. Interviewee 4 traced this division back to once they started to discuss the WCD during senior management team meetings. She recounted that “it sort of evolved that we were looking at two communities of people, and the two communities of people were the people who were going to go and set up the new toxicology, wherever that looked like, and those who were going to close down the old toxicology, ... and I actually put myself in the old ... It was, if I am asked, that’s where I want to be”. This confirms that Interviewee 4 perceived that she was an agent of Tox Lab and implies that managers had a choice about whether they survived the WCD and moved to set up a new part of the organisation, or closed down Tox Lab and left during or at the end of the WCP. Similarly, Interviewee 5 regarded himself as an agent of Tox Lab. He explained that “Although I had a lot of interactions with AgCo on various project teams, there was no real identity with AgCo in terms of management and control and philosophy ... whereas you know it was very much Tox Lab”.

Interviewee 1 perceived that he was an agent of AgCo and the WCD. He took responsibility for the WCD, commenting that “I made it, recommended it upwards, and they accepted it”. This confirms that Interviewee 1 perceived that he was an agent of the WCD. Interviewee 1 announced the WCD at an all staff meeting on 14 September 2006. He moved to AgCo South in January 2007 to start a new part of the AgCo organisation but reflected that “I guess I’d left on September 6<sup>th</sup> or whatever the date, 14<sup>th</sup> ... Now that was when the tie was broken”. This illustrates how Interviewee 1 perceived that he severed his links with Tox Lab after the announcement of the WCD and subsequently perceived himself to be an agent of AgCo rather than Tox Lab. This suggests that managers perceived AgCo and Tox Lab to be separate and distinct organisations, even prior to the WCD. This is supported by Interviewee 2 who observed that “I always felt that Tox Lab was almost a company in its own right”. Interviewee 5 shared this view, describing how Tox Lab “was totally self-contained, you know, its own facilities, its libraries, its HR Department, you know, everything was there”. Therefore, I have reflected this perception of AgCo and Tox Lab as distinct entities in my categorisation of the managers as agents of either AgCo or Tox Lab.

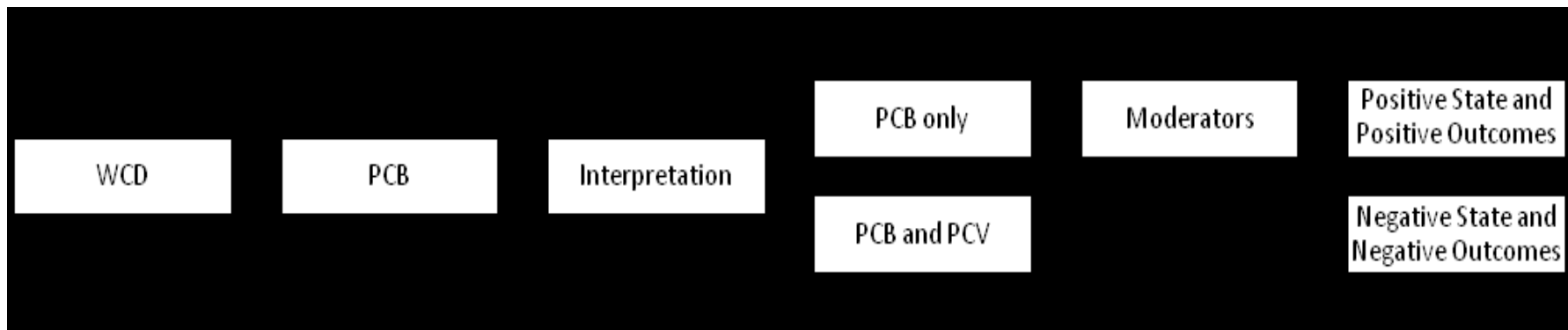
The findings from the two categories of management are presented in conjunction with the findings from employees and Career Change Consultants (CCCs) in relation to each of the Research Objectives. As discussed in Chapter 3, the CCCs fell outside of the scope of the sample as they were third party consultants who were engaged to provide redeployment support to leavers and therefore they were not directly affected by the WCD. Furthermore, because the CCCs were engaged by AgCo in order to support management and employees during the WCP it is plausible that the CCCs will reflect on their contribution in a positive way, contributing to a similarly favourable perspective to the AgCo agents. Thus, the CCCs can be regarded as a sub-sect of the AgCo agents and their findings are drawn upon as and when they provide interesting insights rather than being more systematically presented in relation to each of the Research Objectives as is the case with the findings of management and employees. However, due to their expertise in working for a number of organisations providing outplacement support, it is suggested that they can provide a broader perspective on as well as interesting insights into the implications of the WCD for the PC based on their interactions with redundant workers at Tox Lab during the WCP.

The composition of the employee and CCCs groups of interviewees is outlined in Table 5.2 below:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Interviewee</b>
<b>Employees</b>	7-22
<b>CCCs</b>	23-26

*Table 5.2: Composition of employee and CCC groups*

By way of reminder, the conceptual framework derived from the literature review, which underpins this Tox Lab study is presented in Figure 5.1 below:



*Figure 5.1: Conceptual framework (derived from the literature review)*

As discussed within Chapter 3, the literature suggests that a WCD will be perceived as a PCB which will be interpreted as a PCV with detrimental implications for the state and outcomes of the PC, subject to the influence of moderating factors. My argument within Chapter 3 was the conceptual framework presented in Figure 5.1 over-simplifies the possible implications of a PCB. The findings from the different groups of interviewees which is presented in the next three Chapters, supports my argument. The overall results are summarised in Table 5.3 below which maps the findings from different groups of interviewees against the components of each of the three Research Objectives (ROs):

	Perception of WCD (RO1)	Interpretation of PCB (RO1)	Explanation (RO1)	State of the PC (RO2)	Explanation (RO2)	Outcomes of the PC (RO3)	Explanation (RO3)
<b>AgCo agents</b>	PCB	No PCV	Unavoidable reneging but just	Positive	Mediating factors & justice	Positive	Norm of reciprocity
<b>Tox Lab agents</b>	PCB	PCV	Avoidable reneging & unjust	Mixed	Dual PCs	Mixed	Norm of reciprocity & rule of proximity & no spillover effect
<b>Employees</b>	PCB	PCV	Avoidable reneging & unjust	Mixed	Dual PCs	Mixed	Norm of reciprocity & rule of proximity & no spillover effect
<b>CCCs</b>	PCB	PCV	Reluctant to express a view	Positive	Mediating factors & justice	Positive	Norm of reciprocity

*Table 5.3: Summary of overall findings from different groups of interviewees*



Table 5.3 indicates that in relation to Research Objective (1), all the different groups of interviewees perceived that the WCD was a PCB and, with the exception of the AgCo agents, they interpreted the PCB as a PCV due to their attribution for the WCD. In contrast, the AgCo agents interpreted the PCB as defensible based on the attribution for, and justice of, the WCD and therefore did not interpret the PCB as a PCV. These findings will be elaborated upon within this Chapter.

Table 5.3 indicates that in relation to Research Objective (2), the AgCo agents and CCCs had a straightforward and favourable view of the state of the PC during the WCP. They perceived a single relational PC characterised by fulfilment due to moderating factors and justice perceptions. In contrast, Tox Lab agents and employees held a more complex and more mixed view of the state of the PC during the WCP. They perceived dual PCs, incorporating an AgCo PC and a Tox Lab WC PC. My argument is that Tox Lab agents and employees held negative perceptions of the state of the AgCo PC, evident in what they perceived as reluctant fulfilment of a transactional PC. However, Tox Lab agents and employees shared the surprising view that the Tox Lab PC flourished during the WCP due to moderating factors and justice perceptions. These findings will be elaborated upon in Chapter 6.

Table 5.3 indicates that in relation to Research Objective (3), the AgCo agents and CCCs perceived that employees reciprocated the investment in justice at Tox Lab with favourable outcomes. The Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that employees reciprocated the PCV by AgCo and its agents, contributing to negative outcomes, whilst they agreed that employees reciprocated the justice of the Tox Lab PC with favourable outcomes. Interestingly, they perceived that the outcomes of the Tox Lab were most salient to employees which I argue can be explained by the rule of proximity. Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that the Tox Lab PC was the proximal employment relationship with the strongest impact on their overall evaluation of the PC. Because the state and outcomes of the Tox Lab PC was regarded as favourable by all the different groups of interviewees then this accounts

for the view that, notwithstanding the PCV, the detrimental implications of the WCD were surprisingly limited. These findings are elaborated upon in Chapter 7.

As depicted in Table 5.3, the findings from the agents of Tox Lab and the employees share similar themes which are distinct in some areas from the findings of the AgCo agents. Where relevant, the findings from the CCCs show similarities with the findings from the agents of AgCo and so where appropriate, the findings in this chapter are presented to support this suggestion. Overall, the agents of AgCo (supported by the perspectives of the CCCs) had a more favourable and straightforward perspective compared with the agents of Tox Lab and the employees who had a more mixed and complex perspective on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP. However, these perspectives are embedded in, and need to be interpreted within, their political contexts. The AgCo agents defended their contributions in their perspectives. The AgCo agents defended the WCD and minimised its detrimental implications in order to present their contributions to the WCP in a favourable way, supported by the CCCs who were engaged by AgCo. In contrast, the Tox Lab agents and the employees were the recipients of the WCD which ultimately resulted in the closure of a workplace and the end of jobs and friendships to which they were strongly attached. Therefore, it is perhaps unsurprising that they will articulate a less favourable perspective than the AgCo agents and CCC. This highlights the political underpinning of the perspectives of different groups of interviewees and justifies the adoption of a localist perspective on the research interview as discussed in Chapter 4.

## **5.2 Perceptions of the WCD**

As discussed in Chapter 3, Morrison and Robinson's (1997) conceptualisation of breach and violation is adopted for this thesis. Morrison and Robinson (1997: 230) define breach as "the cognition that one's organization has failed to meet one or more of its obligations" whilst they define violation as "the emotional and affective state that may, under certain conditions, follow from the belief that one's organisation has failed to meet one or more of its obligations". In the following section, I elaborate upon Table 5.3 which indicates a shared view that the WCD was perceived as a PCB which was interpreted as a PCV by the different groups with

the exception of the agents of AgCo who did not interpret the PCB as a PCV. As presented in Table 5.3., the interpretation of the different groups of interviewees can be explained by their attribution for the PCB. First, the evidence to support the claim of a shared perception of the WCD as a PCB is presented. Second, the perspective of the AgCo agents is explored in order to understand and explain why they did not interpret the PCB as a PCV. Third, the shared perspectives of the agents of Tox Lab, the employees and the CCCs is investigated in order to understand and explain their interpretation of the PCB as a PCV.

#### 5.1.1 Shared perception of the WCD as a PCB:

As presented in Table 5.3, all the different groups of interviewees perceived that the WCD was a PCB. The findings from the AgCo agents indicates that they perceived that the WCD was a PCB due to its timings. Interviewee 1 described how he had analysed “the difference between the scenario of keeping Tox Lab open until the lease ends, or of closing Tox Lab starting in 2006, and what we discovered was that it actually made about three years difference”. This analysis of closure in 2015 compared with 2006 suggests that Interviewee 1 perceived that the organisation had promised to sustain Tox Lab until the expiry of the lease in 2015, thereby providing employees with job security until 2015, and had to justify deviation from this timescale for the closure of Tox Lab. Interestingly, he referred to the WCD in 2006 as “the early closure rather than the latest possible one”. He perceived a gap between the closure of Tox Lab in 2015 on the expiry of the lease compared with before then in 2006. Such a perceived gap between the promise of job security implied through the duration of the lease until 2015 and the announcement of the WCD and the start of the WCP in 2006, is consistent with perceptions of PCB.

Interviewee 2 explained that the WCD per se was not a shock to him, but that “the only surprise for me was that we were now being asked to do it probably three or four years earlier than I’d imagined”. This concurs with Interviewee 1’s view that the organisation had promised to sustain Tox Lab until the expiry of the lease in 2015 and any departure from that was perceived to be a PCB. However, Interviewee 2 perceived that for employees, both the WCD and its timing were a source of PCB. He referred to how “I also think that actually folks had not gone so far in their thinking that this project was going to be so wide ... having such a wide ranging impact”.

Interviewee 4 concurred with this view, commenting that “That’s what people thought, it was about the lease. They didn’t think it was about the site was closing earlier ... they couldn’t think that far”. This perception of the WCD as a PCB due to its timings was evident in the findings of the CCCs. Interviewee 23 described the WCD as “an announcement that no-one was expecting” and Interviewee 24 observed that the WCD “was all quicker than they thought. They thought that the change was gonna come closer to ... 2015, they weren’t prepared for it”.

Findings from the employees indicate that they perceived the WCD as a PCB. Employees perceived that the WCD was a breach of the organisation’s obligations to provide job security. Employees perceived that the organisation was obliged to provide them with a job for life. Employees had long service, with a mean tenure of 23.7 years amongst the sample. Employees had spent a substantial amount of their working careers at Tox Lab and perceived that they had a job for life. Interviewee 20 remarked that “you think you’re there for life”. Interviewee 19 reflected that “I don’t think people really expected that news. I don’t know what they were expecting, but I don’t think anyone was expecting site closure announcement, just because most people have been there, like me, 20 years plus, some 30/40 years, from when the building was built, it was a job for life and you never thought of anything other than that”. Similarly, Interviewee 18 explained that “I honestly thought ... I walked through the gate ... big company, been here for years, ... And I thought that’s it, you know, I most probably won’t have to look for another job”. This perception of a job for life amongst employees was illustrated by Interviewee 19 who recalled how a colleague had “just re-mortgaged his house, but hadn’t taken out redundancy cover, because he never thought he’d lose his job, it was a job for life”. Employees perceived that the organisation was obliged to provide them with a job for life because of the size and history of the organisation and that the WCD was perceived as a breach of this obligation.

Nonetheless, employees were aware that the Tox Lab facility had a fifteen year lease which expired in 2015 which constructed some boundaries on their perceptions of job security obligations. Employees’ perceived that the organisation was obliged to provide them with a job during the lease, even if employment security was constrained by the lease. Interviewee 11, for example, expected “that we’d

probably see out the lease ... I never really thought about them giving up on the lease so soon and closing the site". The consensus amongst employees is that they expected an announcement about the future of the site in 2010. Interviewee 7 observed that "most people had got it in their heads that it would be 2010 because that would be three years before the end of the lease around that time, which would give people time to umm start to you know do the transition while Tox Lab was still open, without people kicked off site". Contrary to employees' expectations, the WCD was announced in September 2006 with the first employees leaving in January 2007. Interviewee 20 remarked that "it was a bit of a shock when it came in 2006". As Interviewee 19 noted, many employees had been at Tox Lab since the building was constructed and this workplace was where they had spent the majority of their career. Employees did not expect their workplace to be closed prematurely as evident in Interviewee 8's comment that "I didn't foresee that it was gonna happen as soon as it did". Therefore, employees perceived that the organisation has failed to meet its obligation to provide a job for life or at least until the expiry of the lease in 2015 due to the announcement of the WCD in 2006 and as such, had breached the PC.

#### 5.1.2 AgCo agent's interpretation of the PCB:

As presented in Table 5.3, AgCo agents were the only group of interviewees who did not interpret the PCB as a PCV and this viewpoint is particularly evident in the comments of Interviewee 2 and 3. Interestingly, Interviewee 2 claimed that the PCB had limited emotional affect on him, asserting that "I was just too busy for me to be able to sit back and take in the emotional impact". This is consistent with Interviewee 3 who commented that "you don't kind of have a reaction because it's your job, yeah, I know that sounds a bit daft, but it just ... what you feel personally, becomes almost irrelevant because you've just gotta get on with it". Interviewee 3 did not experience the emotional state that would be consistent with an interpretation of PCV, although these comments reflect their interpretation of the WCD in their roles as agents of the WCD more than their perspectives on whether other people interpreted the PCB as a PCV. Therefore, this could be interpreted as part of their defence of their WCD and their minimisation of the detrimental implications of the WCD.

As presented in Table 5.3, AgCo agents attributed the PCB to circumstances beyond their control which rendered the WCD inevitable and unavoidable and provides an explanation as to why they did not interpret the PCB as a PCV. The inevitability of the WCD is elaborated upon by Interviewee 1 who observed that “like all major events, its two or three things come together at the same time” to contribute to the WCD. First, Interviewee 1 indicated that there was a decrease in demand for toxicology provision from AgCo, stating that “the amount of what it required to do, the company required it to do, was decreasing”. This complies with the legal definition of a redundancy situation within the relevant legal framework and provides a legal rationale for the WCD as unavoidable and inevitable. Second, the Tox Lab facility was leased from 2000-2015 and although Interviewee 1 attempted to secure an extension to the lease beyond 2015, the landlords would not agree to this. Interviewee 2 stressed that there was no prospect of extending the lease beyond 2015, stating that “It was always very clear to me that there was gonna be no opportunity to extend that”. From Interviewee 1’s perspective, this was due to the contentious nature of the animal research undertaken at Tox Lab. He referred to how the landlords of the Tox Lab facility “just thought well why do we want this potentially controversial laboratory in the middle of our site”. AgCo agents perceived that the expiry of the lease in 2015 with no option for renewal was a barrier to the long term sustainability of Tox Lab. This is supported by Interviewee 1 who commented that “underneath it was the fact that we didn’t own the facility ... By 2006 there were only nine years left, which wasn’t long enough to attract new people”. Interestingly, nine years is perceived to be an inadequate promise of job security for the attraction of new employees to Tox Lab.

Nonetheless, the refusal of the landlords to extend the lease on the Tox Lab facility provided the AgCo agents with a defence for the WCD which was beyond their control. Although the AgCo agents recognised that they could move to another facility, they perceived that the conduct of animal research would have been a barrier to this option. Interviewee 6 surmised that “To actually move a facility like that and get permission to open up a new one and all those other things, would have been a nightmare, would undoubtedly have hit the press. There would have been bad PR from it”. Therefore, the failure to secure an extension on the lease of the Tox Lab premises beyond 2015, coupled with the difficulties in relocating an animal

research laboratory within the UK, meant that the AgCo agents perceived that the WCD was inevitable and unavoidable and therefore not a PCV.

Third, Interviewee 1 recounted Tox Lab's attempts to diversify beyond toxicology and into emerging markets such as biopharma. Interviewee 1 explained that "We invested in new technology. We invested people. We invested in being ready for it". However, AgCo agents perceived that these attempts at diversification were thwarted because "The company took the decision to pull out of the bio-pharma business". Interviewee 1 recalled how this decision "left us with a 10% hole in our income with that being the area of growth, just disappeared overnight". AgCo agents perceived that they had tried to secure a long term future for Tox Lab and therefore its employees, but that these diversification attempts had been unsuccessful, leaving them with little option but to make the WCD. Here Interviewee 1 expresses a financial rationale for the WCD which suggests that the PCV was unavoidable due to Tox Lab's difficult financial circumstances.

Fourth, Interviewee 1 referred to the introduction of a company-wide cost saving and organisational change initiative, known as Project 2020, which gave them challenging costs saving targets to meet, as discussed in Chapter 2. Interviewee 3 recalled how "the gauntlet was thrown down that this 2020 project was gonna happen. We had to go away and you know think about what would be {our response}". Interviewee 1 explained that Project 2020 "was designed to take costs out of the whole development chain". Interviewee 1 led the Tox Lab involvement in Project 2020 as Director of Tox Lab and was supported by Interviewees 2 and 3 who were members of the project team. Interviewee 1 recalled how he was told by "the higher paid help [that] something would have to be done about Tox Lab in that I couldn't manage the financial situation that we had ... and that ... we were gonna need to do something quite radical". Project 2020 provided Interviewee 1 with a strategic rationale for the WCD which was unavoidable and contributed to the inevitability of the WCD. Interviewee 1 complied with this edict from Project 2020 and described how he explored various options for addressing AgCo's requirement to cut costs at Tox Lab but "couldn't see where that radical thing could come from". He identified that his options were "to close Tox Lab, under your own time, or to sort of almost let it run down and fade away". This illustrates how Interviewee 1 perceived

that his options for addressing the financial deficit of Tox Lab were limited and therefore that the WCD was unavoidable and inevitable.

For Interviewee 1, the combination of these four factors (the reduction in demand for toxicology, the expiry and non-renewal of the lease, the failed attempts at diversification and the cost saving challenges of Project 2020) constructed a narrative about the inevitable and unavoidable nature of the WCD. He described how “we came to the conclusion that we could no longer sustain Tox Lab”. He perceived that they had tried to sustain Tox Lab and avoid the WCD but that these attempts had failed and left them with no alternative but to make the WCD. This is summed up by Interviewee 1 reporting that “I knew it had to be done”. Interviewee 2 shared his view of the inevitability of the WCD, also citing the fixed term nature of the lease on the Tox Lab premises as a key contributory factor. He commented that “right from the beginning of the lease being drawn up, we knew that that was not going to be a long term future, and it wasn’t just that it was gonna be 15 years, because we knew that it would take three to five years to close any place down, because we were doing studies that took three years to complete, so that was already telling us that we had to do something by around about 2010, 2011, 2012 latest”. This is consistent with Interviewee 3 who referred to the WCD as “a foregone conclusion”. He recalled how Tox Lab was historically protected from major cost saving initiatives because it was regarded as an asset. Interviewee 2 and 5 both described Tox Lab as “the jewel in the crown” of the organisation due to the international reputation for excellence. Interviewee 3 claimed that Tox Lab “got to a point where it couldn’t be protected any longer”. He explained that a number of senior leaders who had started their careers at Tox Lab were strong advocates for Tox Lab and had ensured that it was protected and sustained but that an influx of new AgCo senior managers with no previous connections with Tox Lab meant that Tox Lab was subjected to a more objective scrutiny. Interviewee 3 perceived that the Tox Lab advocates at senior levels had lost their influence and ability to protect Tox Lab, making the WCD both inevitable and unavoidable and providing an explanation for why the agents of AgCo did not interpret the PCB as a PCV.

The other key feature of the interpretation of the PCB by AgCo agents was their perceptions about the justice of the WCD and the WCP. When asked to describe



the treatment of employees during the WCP, Interviewee 1 reflected that “The word that comes to my mind is decency”. He explained that he did not want to treat the Tox Lab employees “as people on their way out” and claimed that the WCP strategy was underpinned by treating employees with dignity and respect. Such treatment is indicative of interpersonal justice as supported by Interviewee 1’s assertion that “we told them we would look after them”. Even though the consensus of the organisational agents is that the organisation breached its obligation to provide job security until the expiry of the lease, Interviewee 1 referred to how “We made ... we said look nobody stops work tomorrow”. Documentary evidence detailing the exit profile indicates that the first people left Tox Lab four months after the announcement whilst the last leavers had almost four years continuous employment. This documentary evidence supports Interviewee 1’s claim that management provided some job security after the announcement of the WCD, albeit very limited for the first wave of redundant workers. For Interviewee 1, these examples provide evidence of interpersonal justice during the WCP which underpinned his interpretation that the PCB was not a PCV.

Interviewee 1 commented that at the time of the Tox Lab WC, that AgCo “knew how to close a site, and that was very helpful”. Interviewee 1 observed that “the company’s been pretty honourable all the way through. I mean it had ... the {legacy parent Company way} was that it looked after its workforce, as well as the {legacy parent Company} heritage was that they looked after the workforce, so I think that you can see that comes through in AgCo”. This implies that there was a well-established AgCo approach to WC which was applied at Tox Lab. Interviewee 6 elaborated upon this “track record”, describing it as “a very professional way, in being honest, quite a generous way ... managed very very well and ... empathetically in terms of the employees”. This suggests that the approach is designed to look after employees and treat them well which is associated with interpersonal justice. Interviewee 6 explained that this approach to redundancy was “not the AgCo way. I think the ... it is one of the {parent Company} legacy things, you know, it is one of those things that comes through from the paternalistic {parent Company} days. I think, from a redundancy perspective, its been adopted as the AgCo way ... A legacy way that AgCo is reasonably comfortable with”. This suggests that AgCo adopted the standard approach to WC at Tox Lab which was one which was informed by a paternalistic legacy and underpinned by interpersonal

justice. These perceptions of justice in conjunction with the interpretation of the PCB as inevitable and unavoidable constructed the interpretation of the AgCo agents that the PCB was not a PCV.

#### 5.1.1 Interpretation of the PCB as a PCV by Tox Lab agents and employees:

In contrast to the interpretation of the PCB by the agents of AgCo, the Tox Lab agents and the employees interpreted the PCB as a PCV as depicted in Table 5.3. Interestingly, the CCCs were reluctant to share their interpretation of the PCB. When asked whether he regarded the WCD as the right decision, Interviewee 24's response was that "I can't judge that. That's not for me to judge. I can't judge that". Therefore, the CCCs provided limited insights from which to draw with regards to Research Objective (1) and so the following section explores the findings from the agents of Tox Lab and the employees.

Interviewee 4 illustrates the perspective of the Tox Lab agents in the way that she elaborated upon the emotional and affective state of employees following the announcement of the WCD. She described how "their world is in ruins, and it was ... and of course they wanted to vent their anger at me ... those poor sods were in a complete daze". Interviewee 4 perceived that employees exhibited both disappointment and anger emotions which are identified by Morrison and Robinson (1997) as indicators of PCV. The reaction of a senior scientist particularly caught her attention during the announcement of the WCD. She described how he "stood there with tears streaming down ... And not an expression on his face. Just tears streaming down his face". Interviewee 4 also reported the angry reaction of an employee who "ran past my office in Block F shouting well that's fuckin' nice isn't it, so the whole fuckin' place is closing, well how long have they fuckin' known about this". These are examples of the external display of distress consistent with interpretations of PCV (Morrison and Robinson: 1997) and provide a sharp contrast to the perspectives of the agents of AgCo.

Interviewee 5 observed that "Some people were upset, you know, I had a number of people that came to my office to sit down, not quite sort of tears, but certainly a lot of floor gazing". Some of the descriptions of the emotional reactions by managers

is peppered with references to death and bereavement. For example, Interviewee 4 recounted the mood at Tox Lab following the first wave of redundancies, commenting that “we were grieving”. This viewpoint of agents of Tox Lab is evident in the findings from employees who reported that they mourned the loss of their jobs, colleagues and the Tox Lab facility. Interviewee 19 remarked that “people tied it into the redundancy process as like a bereavement” whilst Interviewee 21 agreed that “it was like a bereavement I think to most of us”. Such expressions of grief indicate the scale of the emotional impact of the PCB on employees which is consistent with interpretations of PCV (Morrison and Robinson, 1997). Interviewee 15 revealed that “it was quite stunning really to see just the devastation and how upset people were”. This is consistent with the findings reported from the interviews with the CCCs as evident in Interviewee 23’s comment that “on an emotional level, people felt quite betrayed”.

Employees reported grief over their job loss. Interviewee 9 described the grief he felt when he had to hand over his job “knowing that I was going, I’ve handed over my role to another guy in Germany ... and that’s difficult again handing over a job that you’ve grown up with, and built”. This emotional distress is consistent with interpretations of PCV (Morrison and Robinson, 1997). Interviewee 15 recalled how she “was still grieving for the job that I’d lost” whilst Interviewee 21 revealed that “sometimes you think back and you’re sad because it was ... it was a good company to work for and you had lots of opportunities ... I enjoyed my job so much, you know, it’s the best job I’ve ever had”.

Employees reported grief about the loss of colleagues and friends due to the WCD. Interviewee 19 suggested that employees were mourning the loss of the Tox lab family, stating that “as a mourning, it was certainly it was the loss of something you’d known for a very long time, the fact that they had built up kind of a family basically”. Employees mourned the loss of close relationships that had developed over a long time and which they perceived to have been irrevocably damaged by the WCD. Interviewee 19 commented on the “loss of family, and kind of been there supporting each other for all that time, and suddenly, just to find out, well reality is you’ll probably never see that person again, or you may see them once a year if you get together ... that was probably the big shock. It was kind of a severance in that way,

in that even though they'd not died, you just may never see them again, when you're used to seeing that person every day, seven hours a day, for thirty years". Interviewee 12 identified that the "lowest point was all the people going" and Interviewee 15 agreed that "It wasn't the just losing the job, it was losing the people". Interviewee 15 shared this view re loss of Tox Lab family, commenting that "my life, was that place, and some of my closest friends still are and were you know Tox Lab based and so it was ... and some of them probably closer than other members of my family, so it was a family, and that for me was the devastation, more so than the job loss". These observations support my claim that employees interpreted the PCB as a PCV.

Employees also reported mourning the loss of the Tox Lab workplace. Employees reported grief at the sight of empty rooms and an emptying building. Interviewee 17, for example, recounted "that definitely wasn't nice, seeing the rooms, that brought it home really when you saw empty rooms where your colleagues used to be, that brought it home over that time really". Interviewee 11 agreed that the empty rooms exacerbated their sense of loss, describing how "you'd be walking down the echoing corridors, which was really really strange, and sometimes you could hear footsteps in the distance and you're like who's that, is it a ghost, or ... is there somebody there, and so all that was really quite strange. You'd walk past offices where people ... that would have been full of people ... people that you'd worked with previously, and all that was quite upsetting in a way because you think gosh they've all gone". This suggests to me that employees were sad about the emptying and emptiness of Tox Lab and mourned the loss of its vibrancy during the WCP.

### 5.1.2 Moderators

In contrast to AgCo agents, Tox Lab agents and employees interpreted the PCB as a PCV for the following reasons:

- *The WCD was avoidable because Tox Lab was busy and could have downsized rather than closing;*
- *The WCD was disrespectful to employees in implying that their work could be outsourced to a third party provider; and*

- *The communication of the WCD was disrespectful to employees in suggesting that the decision-makers had prioritised securing their future employment.*

Each of these reasons is explored further in the following section.

*The WCD was avoidable because Tox Lab was busy and could have downsized rather than closing;*

Tox Lab agents and employees did not share the view of the AgCo agents that the WCD was unavoidable. From their perspective, the WCD could have been avoided because Tox Lab was busy and they regarded downsizing as a more logical and preferable alternative to the WCD. Interviewee 5, for example, surmised that “it probably was a premature decision. I think that the laboratory in its form could have gone on for another five to 10 years”. Employees perceived that Tox Lab was busy and expanding rather than declining and dying. Interviewee 10, for example, reported that “the animal capacity was running at about 90%. The average for a lab of that type is 70% so we’d been running at 90% animal capacity for about two years, which is probably the highest of any lab in the world in terms of throughput and business, we were incredibly busy”. Interviewee 13 described how the animal testing areas were starting new studies, reporting that “we had this Japanese study that we’d just started in July, you know, two years”. She explained that the Japanese study was interpreted by employees as an indicator of job security because “starting a two year animal study, you could almost guarantee you’d be going for four years ‘cause that’s how long it took to complete all the reporting and everything, but obviously that didn’t happen”. Interviewee 13 recalled how the Tox Lab was recruiting new animal technologists in order to meet the workload demands. She reported that “we’d had some people that hadn’t been there for that long, you know, that one thing that’s difficult to understand”. Interviewee 13 also recalled how the animal facilities were being expanded shortly before the announcement of the WCD in order to meet the increase in demand for studies, reflecting that “all the units were pretty full. We’d only just had things done ‘cause the dog unit was gonna fit more dogs in”. Employees referred to how new work commenced shortly before the announcement of the WCD in other areas of Tox Lab. Interviewee 7 worked in the metabolism area of Tox Lab and recounted that “Before they just pulled the plug ... we’d just started a massive project”. From the employee’s perspective, Tox Lab was

sustainable suggesting that the WCD was avoidable and providing an explanation as to why employees interpreted the PCB as a PCV.

Interviewee 4 recalled how, at the outset of the senior management discussions about the WCD, they discussed downsizing rather than outsourcing of toxicology and the closure of Tox Lab. She recounted how “we were talking about a new facility, we’re not talking about outsourcing. That was what was on the table ... we are going to have a new facility somewhere, a smaller facility”. She explained that she was unclear about the location of any new facility, recalling “That was very much on the table that it might not be in the UK, and there was some sort of informal discussion about where it might be. Europe, the States, and my recollection is that it was sort of felt it would be likely to be the States”. Interestingly, Interviewee 2 was part of a project team that met to discuss a new operating model for Tox Lab in 2006. Interviewee 4 was not party to these discussions, but Interviewee 2 described how “we started off on that very morning with a view that we were going to have to build or find a smaller facility somewhere else in the world. Probably not in the UK because of the animal welfare legislation”. He explained that “By the end of the day, ... the more we talked about it as a group of three or four people, the more we realised actually that we didn’t even need to build a new facility”. Interviewee 4 was clearly not updated by management colleagues following this significant discussion and decision and this may have contributed to her view that there was an alternative to closure and full outsourcing of toxicology.

Interviewee 4 argued that “there was another option in terms of closure, so my view was we should have bitten the bullet much earlier and down-sized”. Interviewee 4 regarded downsizing as a preferable alternative to the WCD on the basis of “Scientific business reasons ... and it was the crème de la crème in terms of the work that it did”. However, she perceived that downsizing was not given proper consideration, referring to how it “was just sort of dismissed as a non-starter”. Prior to announcing the WCD to the employees, Interviewee 1 informed each member of his management team in an individual meeting. Interviewee 4 explained that she knew that he would inform her of the WCD but expected Tox Lab to continue in some (downsized) form rather than be 100% outsourced. She referred to how she “knew what he was gonna say when I walked through the door ... That the decision

had been made and we were closing. But I didn't know where we were going or what we were doing". After she had been informed of the WCD and the outsourcing of toxicology, she recalled how she had questioned "how can you do this when I did always believe that there was another way". This illustrates how Interviewee 4 regarded the PCB as avoidable which I believe contributed to her interpretation of the PCB as a PCV.

Like the agents of Tox Lab, employees perceived that downsizing would have been a more logical and preferable decision compared with the WCD. Interviewee 15 commented that "the Tox Lab closure was the wrong thing, but I think that total devastation of nothing was the surprise for me I think out of all of it. I thought they'd retain that capability". This suggests that she expected Tox Lab to continue in a downsized form. Interviewee 9 explained that "within our group, project management, we always thought that they would want to retain our group, people with the skills you would need whether or not you had actual animal testing there or not, and we also thought that, even if it closed down, then they would probably have an office somewhere in the North West to retain that expertise there". This suggests to me that employees perceived that the WCD and outsourcing of toxicology provision could have been avoided by downsizing and retaining technical expertise within the vicinity of Tox Lab. The view of the agents of Tox Lab and the employees, that the WCD could have been avoided because Tox Lab was busy and could have been downsized rather than closed, provides an explanation for why these groups of interviewees interpreted the PCB as a PCV.

*The WCD was disrespectful to employees in implying that their work could be outsourced to a third party provider*

Both Tox Lab agents and employees regarded the decision to outsource toxicology provision to a third party provider as disrespectful and therefore interpersonal injustice. Interviewee 5, for example, asserted that the WCD and the total outsourcing of toxicology studies "was a very big underestimate of the qualities of the people that were at Tox Lab". Here, Interviewee 5 is challenging the notion that the toxicology provision from an internationally renowned centre like Tox Lab, could simply be outsourced. This suggests to me that Interviewee 5 regards this as

disrespectful treatment which is indicative of interpersonal injustice and is in direct contrast to the views AgCo agents who perceived that the WCD was underpinned by justice. Interviewee 5 argued that “it’s not just the cost of doing studies. It’s the expertise that we’re gonna lose, and somebody actually I think made a cock-up there”. This concern is echoed by Interviewee 4 who stated that “The skill and the scientific expertise and the capability and the quality and the knowledge and the science and how are you ever gonna get that done in the same way, anywhere else?”

Employees shared this perception that the WCD and outsourcing was disrespectful and inconsistent with the organisation’s rhetoric about the value of Tox Lab and its employees. Employees perceived that this disrespectful treatment was compounded by the organisation expecting them to show employees at third party contractors how to do their jobs. Interviewee 13 explained that “when we were closing down the animal side of it, some of the contract work was going out to other places as well, but their staff came to us and we had to show them how to do it”. Interviewee 8 observed that “that’s the bit that people found very difficult around ... well actually we’re gonna ask these people to do what was your job, but will you go and show them how to do it”. This suggests that employees perceived the outsourcing of their work and the expectation that they would train third parties in how to undertake their work as disrespectful. This provides an explanation for their interpretation of the PCB as a PCV.

*The communication of the WCD was disrespectful to employees in suggesting that the decision-makers had prioritised securing their future employment.*

Tox Lab agents and employees were critical of Interviewee 1’s communication of the WCD. Interviewee 4 remembered that “it did look as though we’re gonna leave Interviewee 4 to get on with this, and we’re going, and it came across as we’re alright jack”. She explained that this was because Interviewee 1 edited the corporate power point presentation constructed for standardised communications of the WCD across all AgCo sites. She recalled how Interviewee 1 displayed “the bloody slide show ... that showed him and Interviewee 2 and everybody else okay jack type thing”. Interviewee 4 interpreted this as insensitive treatment, as did Interviewee 5. He



recalled that “Interviewee 1 walked out of the back of the room, rather than up the front, well there’s something about I’ve done my bit, and off I go”. Employees shared this view with the Tox Lab agents of the announcement of the WCD as disrespectful treatment of employees. In particular, employees were perturbed that Interviewee 1 informed the workforce that he and Interviewee 2 were relocating to AgCo South to lead a new organisation whilst the Tox Lab employees were facing compulsory redundancy. Interviewee 13 interpreted the announcement of the WCD as “I’ve got a job, I’m alright Jack” whilst Interviewee 22 perceived that “they were alright Jack”. Employees interpreted this as Interviewee 1 lacking respect and empathy. The perception of the Tox Lab agents and employees about insensitive communication of the WCD contrasts with the claim of AgCo agents that they treated employees with dignity and respect and provides an explanation for their interpretation of the PCB as a PCV.

Employees perceived that the outcomes of the WCD were more favourable for senior management than they were for the Tox Lab employees. Interviewee 14 reported that “What annoyed me a bit was the fact that Interviewee 1 and these people had places to go, you know, they were sorted before”. This implies that employees perceived that senior management used their prior knowledge of the WCD to their advantage to secure their own futures before they considered the security of the Tox Lab employees. Interviewee 22 questioned the fairness of senior management securing their own jobs in the new organisation, asserting that “I didn’t see there was any necessity for the people that carried on in AgCo South to be the people that did carry on. I mean they were the guys that were well-off and didn’t need the extra money to carry on working. Why does Interviewee 1 need another job at his age? I mean he’d have been quite happy retiring, you know there were younger lads, the younger people, that are gonna have more difficulty getting jobs, you’d have thought could have done their jobs just as well”. Interviewee 22’s comments illustrate how employees perceived distributive injustice in the outcomes of the WCD across the organisational hierarchy, thereby providing an explanation for their interpretation of the PCB as a PCV.

Therefore, in relation to Research Objective 1, all the different groups of interviewees agreed that the WCD was a PCB due to the timing of the WCD so far

in advance of the expiry of the lease. However, the AgCo agents did not interpret the PCB as a PCV on the grounds that the WCD was inevitable and unavoidable but underpinned by interpersonal justice in particular. In contrast, the Tox Lab agents and employees interpreted the PCB as a PCV on the basis that the WCD was avoidable and unjust. My argument is that these perspectives are constructed by the participants in order to present their respective contributions to the WCP favourably. In this case, the AgCo agents deflected attribution towards external factors beyond their control and emphasised their fair treatment of employees. Tox Lab agents and employees disputed the attribution for, and justice of, the WCD which is consistent with their view that the WCD was flawed. The CCCs were careful about sharing their interpretation of the PCB due to the risk of undermining their relationship with the agents of AgCo who had commissioned their services.

In the next chapter, the perspectives of the different groups of interviewees are presented in relation to Research Objective (2).

## Chapter 6: Findings in relation to Research Objective (2)

### 6.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents the findings from the different groups of interviewees in relation to Research Objective (2).

**Research Objective (2): To critically analyse management and employee perspectives on the state of the PC during the WCP.**

As presented in Table 5.3, the AgCo agents and CCCs held a positive evaluation of the state of the PC during the WCP, whilst the Tox Lab agents and employees had a more complex and mixed evaluation. The findings from the agents of AgCo indicate that they perceived a single PC during the WCP which was at Tox Lab and they held a positive evaluation of its state during the WCP. This perspective is evident in the findings from the CCCs. In contrast to this straightforward and favourable perspective, the agents of Tox Lab and employees perceived dual PCs, incorporating an AgCo PC and a Tox Lab PC. Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that the PCV had detrimental implications for the state of the AgCo PC, evident in what they perceived as reluctant fulfilment of a transactional PC. This is consistent with Tietz and Nadin (2011: 319) who argue that “For employees, a failure on behalf of the employer to fulfil their obligations and promises results in a range of withdrawal behaviours and a shift towards a more transactional orientation towards their employer”. However, the Tox Lab agents and employees shared the surprising view that the Tox Lab PC flourished during the WCP which is contrary to Tietz and Nadin (2011) and is counter-intuitive. The evidence to support the findings from the different groups of interviewees is critically analysed in the following section starting with what is a shared view between the different groups of interviewees about the positive state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. Then, the findings

from the agents of Tox Lab and the employees about the state of the AgCo PC is critically analysed.

## 6.2 Favourable evaluation of the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP by the different groups of interviewees

The different groups of interviewees shared a favourable evaluation of the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. The AgCo agents perceived that the state of the PC during the WCP was surprisingly good and by implication, better than they expected. This is supported by Interviewee 2 who stated that “if I’d taken the time to think about the nightmare scenarios ... it must have been better than any expectation that I might have come up with”. AgCo agents perceived that the PC was a two way exchange of obligations between the organisation and the employees. Interviewee 1 alluded to the two-way exchange in stating that the PC was “based on a partnership between the people working and the company”. This is consistent with my conceptualisation of the PC at the level of the relationship between the parties, as discussed in Chapter 2 (Guest: 2004). This description of the PC as a partnership suggests to me that AgCo agents perceived that the PC was functional, and therefore in a positive state, during the WCP. This sense of surprise about the favourable state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP is evident in the findings from the employees. Interviewee 12 reported that “it was actually enjoyable, but that was because the people were being looked after”. Interviewee 20 concurred with this view, reflecting that “It could have been the worst place to be, but it wasn’t, it was really nice in a funny way”. Such favourable perceptions about the state of the PC during the WCP are surprising and as explored in the following section, can be explained by moderating factors and justice perceptions.

### 6.2.1 Moderators – age and tenure

The different groups of interviewees perceived that individual characteristics moderated the detrimental implications of the PCV and were enablers of the positive state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. Age and tenure were perceived as incentives for employees to fulfil their obligations because of their implications for pension and severance benefits. Interviewee 1 confirmed this from the perspective of the agents of AgCo, reflecting on how it “was really helpful was that there was

this core of people who'd been at Tox Lab for a long time, who were in their 50's, so they were financially gonna be secure, they were gonna get their redundancy and their pension". This core of mature, long-serving employees had the incentive of a large severance payment and an unabated pension waiting for them at the end of the WCP which provided financial security, thereby potentially reducing their insecurity about their futures.

Employees shared the view that age influenced their responses to the WCD as supported by Interviewee 10 who commented that employees' responses to the WCD "was age dependent". Employees perceived that the WCD had favourable implications for employees over the age of 50 due to their age-related eligibility for unabated pension and generous severance benefits. Interviewee 15 described the benefits for the over-50's as "the ultimate package". Interviewee 19 reported that "Certainly the people who retired and got their pensions and you know the tax free bonuses through redundancy ... they've done very well out of it". Interviewee 12 reported that he "was quite happy with the situation because it meant that I would be paid my pension and ... I could choose to go and find another job, or I could choose not to go and find another job ... a very privileged position".

Employees perceived that the WCD had less favourable implications for middle-age employees. Interviewee 8 reflected that "It was the folk in the middle that suffered the most, you know, the people who were in their 40's, who were not gonna be able to take the pension, who probably still had a big mortgage and kids and you know all those kind of folk, you know, were the people I sort of sympathised most with". Employees perceived that the WCD had a neutral influence for younger employees. Interviewee 19 described younger employees as "20's, you know early to mid 20's" and observed that "the young people ... either a) weren't fussed, or b) just wanted to go 'cause they hadn't got the longevity there". As discussed in Chapter 4, the mean age of the sample for this Tox Lab study was 53.2 years which meant that they were eligible for the unabated pension and enhanced severance benefits. Therefore, there were fewer employees in the less favourable age band. For the majority of the sample, the WCD had positive implications for their financial security and my argument is that the age profile of the sample is an explanatory factor for the positive perceptions of the state of the PC during the WCP.

Employees perceived that many of the people who stayed during the WCP were over the age of 50. Interviewee 8 commented that “when we got into sort of like the last year, ... most of the people that were still there, had been there for a long time, you know, so the vast majority of us were in the 50’s and older ... we were at that end of our career, and I suppose that’s pretty smart because we had the most to lose if we left before we got our redundancy”. Employees perceived that due to their age, the majority of employees had substantial financial incentives to fulfil their obligations during the WCP with positive implications for the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. Interviewee 8 also remarked that “maybe we’re all a little bit more philosophical about what was going on, even if we thought some of the decisions were daft, well, they’ve made their decision, they’re gonna have to live with it now, you know”. Employees perceived that older workers were more tolerant about the violation of the PC. The age-related tolerance and financial incentives can help to explain the surprising findings of fulfilment of a relational type of PC with no negative behavioural consequences. This suggests to me that age had a positive influence on employee’s responses to the violation of the PC which is consistent with Carstensen et al, (1999) and an enabler of the favourable state of the PC during the WCP.

Interestingly, the findings from the agents of Tox Lab indicate how the moderators of age and tenure were used strategically. Interviewee 4 perceived that she had a “carrot dangling over you which isn’t very nice, which is if you go before I want you to go, you’re not getting your severance”. This suggests to me that the age and tenure of the Tox Lab employees provided them with the financial incentive to fulfil their obligations, such as loyalty. Moreover, Interviewee 4 explained she used the demographics of the workforce as a strategic lever to secure employee loyalty, recounting how “we looked at the demographics and we said well we’ve got like three communities haven’t we. We’ve got them who couldn’t give a fig, and they’re gonna go anyway ‘cause they’re not ... no loyalty, no severance, duh duh ... We’ve got those in the middle who its gonna be real heartache for because they’re on the wrong side of the pension and the severance might not be that great, and they still need to continue to work, and we’ve got the lot who are thinking whoopee what I’ve been waiting for”. The use of moderators such as age and tenure for strategic

purposes is supported by Interviewee 1 who commented that “a great deal of care was taken in choosing people who had been supportive and loyal, enthusiastic and professional, to start with”. This illustrates how organisational agents perceived that individual variables were an incentive for employees to fulfil their obligations and therefore considered as having the scope to moderate the detrimental implications of the WCD.

### 6.2.2 Moderators - Professional norms

The findings from the different groups of interviewees identified the professional background of the Tox Lab employees as conducive to the fulfilment of obligations and thus a moderator of the potentially detrimental implications of the WCD for the state of the PC. The agents of AgCo regarded the employees as professionals who delivered work to a high standard. Interviewee 2 recalled how he hoped that employees “would continue with all the professionalism that they had shown prior to the closure and that they were not going to start letting standards slip”. Interestingly, Tox Lab agents perceived that employees drew upon their professional background as a coping mechanism during the WCP. Interviewee 4 understood employee’s to be tantamount to saying “you might think I might not worth anything and I haven’t got a job any more and you’ve made me redundant, but two fingers to you because I’m not gonna lose my integrity and professionalism. I’m gonna do everything absolutely right, the best, if not better than I can”. Interviewee 4 perceived that employees expressed their discontent with the WCD through defiantly displaying professionalism in order to highlight that the WCD was flawed and that the organisation would lose valuable expertise due to the compulsory redundancies. This is supported by Interviewee 6 who commented that “what drove people to it was the one that says we’ll show them. It’s the they might be closing us down and they might not want us any more, but we’re bloody good at what we do, and we’re gonna prove that we’re good at what we do, and we’re gonna prove right till the end that we’re good at what we do”. Ironically, this display of defiance from employees was welcomed by organisational agents because it stimulated employees to fulfil their obligations and thereby contributed to the positive state of the PC during the WCP.

The findings from employees indicate that they shared this view of their professional background as a moderator. Employees perceived that they had behaved professionally during their long careers at Tox Lab and this was the norm for them. This is supported by Interviewee 12 who explained “that’s what you are ... You’re working in Tox Lab, you’ve been encouraged to work to a high standard, you’ve been trained to a high standard”. This suggests to me that professionalism had been strongly instilled in Tox Lab employees which had favourable implications for their responses to the WCD and was therefore an explanatory factor for employee’s favourable perspectives on the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. Employees did not perceive any reason to change their professional norms during the WCP. Interviewee 7 observed that “we’ve always delivered our very best and why make a change now”. Given the average tenure of employees of 23.7 years, it is plausible that after professional behaviour has been the norm for this length of time, that employees would have limited knowledge of any other ways to behave. This is supported by Interviewee 12 who described professional behaviour as “pretty much inbred ... it certainly didn’t need much looking after”. The implication of this is that professionalism was institutionalised within Tox Lab employees. Therefore, it would not occur to employees to discontinue delivering their work to a high standard. My argument is that such professional norms underpinned employee fulfilment of obligations and were an enabler of the positive state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP.

Furthermore, employees perceived that they needed to retain their professional identity in order to secure alternative employment. Interviewee 9 commented that employees “needed to maintain you know their professionalism, because if they wanted to go onto another job, you know, I suppose that might be part of it”. Interviewee 11 agreed that maintaining her professionalism was essential for her future career prospects. She explained that she “kept some of the science that I was doing because I wanted to do it, and I realised that if I ... I wanted to continue on with that after I’d left Tox Lab, and if I stopped doing it for two years, that would be very difficult”. This suggests that professional norms shaped employee’s responses to the PCV and regulated their behaviour during the WCP, thereby explaining the relational type of PC and the positive perceptions about the state of the PC during the WCP. This suggests that professional norms governed the PC during the WCP. This is interesting because it identifies norms other than reciprocity as governing the



PC. This departs from Guest (2004) who identifies reciprocity as the norm which governs the PC.

### 6.2.3 Moderators - Employment Status

Interestingly, the different groups of interviewees perceived that the WCD had the potential to moderate the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. This was evident in the findings from the agents of Tox Lab. Although Interviewee 4 perceived that downsizing was preferable to the WCD, she reasoned that downsizing “would still have been painful in a different way because you’d have had that divided community wouldn’t you of who’s staying and who’s going”. This suggests to me that the WCD constructed a sense of community with a shared predicament which was conducive to sustaining trust at Tox Lab during the WCP. If downsizing had been chosen instead of the WCD, then a selection criteria would have been applied in order to identify leavers and survivors. This may have been divisive and undermined trust between employees as they competed to stay or leave. This is supported by Interviewee 6 who commented that “a site closure is cleaner ... you’re not selecting colleagues for who’s gonna get the one job versus the two”. Interviewee 5 perceived that “the fact that they closed the whole thing down, made the whole exercise easier to handle because everybody was in the same boat, at every level”. Interviewee 5 perceived that the WCD rather than a downsizing exercise, enhanced distributive justice perceptions and was an enabler of the positive state of the PC during the WCP.

Similarly, Interviewee 6 observed a sense of solidarity amongst employees at Tox Lab, interpreting that employee’s perceived that “We’re in a situation but we’ll all stick together”. Interviewee 4 concurred with this view, reporting that “It was almost like we were on a little island and we had to survive and support ourselves through this, so we became ... we had to work and help each other, so we became that stronger community”. The implication is that the Tox Lab employees felt vulnerable during the WCP but they all pulled together and could trust each other because they were all in the same predicament. Interviewee 4 perceived that this vulnerability during the WCP was conducive to trust between the parties. She explained that “It’s just that you really don’t know people until something like this, and you’re working

so closely with them, and you're so dependent on them doing the right thing, I suppose they have the trust in you, but you have the trust in them that they're gonna do the right thing". From her perspective, their shared vulnerability was conducive to sustaining trust which in turn, underpinned the fulfilment of a relational PC and was an enabler of the positive state of the PC during the WCP.

Employees perceived that although the WCD was devastating and interpreted as a PCV, the majority of employees were in the same redundant position. Unlike a downsizing situation, employees perceived that they could trust and support each other because they were not competing for jobs. This is confirmed by Interviewee 13 who observed that "we were all gonna help each other now, we're all in the same boat". This suggests to me that employees perceived that their shared employment status as leavers modified the potentially detrimental implications of the PCV for the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. Interviewee 7 concurred with this reporting that "the fact that it was the whole site was kind of a relief because everybody was in the same boat". This implies to me that employees did not regard the WCD as divisive or a source of conflict which was conducive to favourable perspectives on the state of the PC during the WCP. Interviewee 8 explained that "we were all in the same boat, and probably because, again, someone else said to me how much more difficult it would have been if it had have been some of you are going and some of you are staying because then its them and us, and people feel guilty because they're not losing their job". Even though some employees had different leaving dates during the WCP, this did not appear to undermine the sense of shared employment status as leavers. This implies to me that the shared predicament of compulsory redundancy arising from the WCD constructed a sense of solidarity amongst employees which is perceived to have contributed to the positive state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP.

In addition to these moderators, all the different groups of interviewees identified justice as a key explanatory factor for their positive evaluations of the state of the PC during the WCP as elaborated upon in the following section.

#### 6.2.4 Interpersonal justice derived from the organisation exceeding its obligations

The findings from the different groups of interviewees indicate a shared perception of justice derived from the organisation exceeding its obligations to employees. In the following section, I analyse the evidence which supports my claim that the organisation exceeded its obligations to employees. In order to demonstrate this over-fulfilment, I identify the content of the Tox Lab PC and draw upon Rousseau's (1990) categorisation of obligations based on the transactional and relational continuum which is presented below in Table 6.1:

Transactional terms		Relational terms
Economic	Focus	Economic, emotional
Partial	Inclusion	Whole-person
Close-ended, specific	Time-frame	Open-ended, indefinite
Written	Formalization	Unwritten
Static	Stability	Dynamic
Narrow	Scope	Pervasive
Public, observable	Tangibility	Subjective, understood

**Table 6.1: Continuum of PC terms (Rousseau, 1995)**

I draw upon Table 6.1 to categorise the content of the PC at Tox Lab based on their Transactional (T) or Relational (R) nature and then include my interpretation of whether organisational agents perceived that the obligations were Fulfilled (F), Exceeded (E) or Violated (V). The obligations identified in Table 6.2 below are those which are most relevant to the WCP. Table 6.2 below summarises the findings of the different groups of interviewees on the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. In the following sections, I discuss the identification and categorisation of each of the obligations listed in Table 6.2:

Employee obligations	T or R	Evaluation of fulfilment	Organisation's obligations	T or R	Evaluation of fulfilment
Job performance	T	F	Provide security	R	E
Loyalty	R	F	Pay severance and pension benefits	T	E
Flexibility	R	F	Communicate and consult with employees	R	E
			Support employees	R	E
			Reward good performance	T	E

**Table 6.2: Evaluation of the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP by the different groups of interviewees**

Table 6.2 indicates a shared view that employees fulfilled all their obligations to the organisation and that the organisation exceeded their obligations to employees during the WCP. Moreover, the list of obligations suggests to me a shared perception of a relational PC. This perception of the fulfilment of a relational PC during the WCP is counter-intuitive and departs from Tietz and Nadin (2011) who propose that employees will adopt a more transactional PC in response to a PCV. It is also noticeable that the different groups of interviewees perceived that the organisation exceeded their obligations, compared with employees who fulfilled their obligations, during the WCP. I argue that this perception of over-fulfilment of obligations by the organisation was regarded as evidence of fair and decent treatment which had favourable implications for justice perceptions and contributed to the positive evaluations of the state of the PC during the WCP. The following

section presents the evidence to support Table 6.2, starting with evaluations of employee fulfilment of obligations.

#### 6.2.4 Employee fulfilment of job performance obligations

During the WCP, the different groups of interviewees perceived that employees were obliged to deliver toxicology studies on time and to the required quality standards. Interviewee 4, as an agent of Tox Lab, illustrated this point in referring to how their key objectives during the WCP were “to complete all of those studies to schedule so we were not in contractual breach”. This was a salient obligation for agents of AgCo because of the business critical toxicology studies for AgCo products which were started at Tox Lab in the months prior to the WCP. Interviewee 2 explained that “at that time one of the first new active ingredients that AgCo wanted to develop was really coming our way, and that included the programme of toxicology studies, including those long-term studies I mentioned that take three years to complete”. AgCo agents were aware of the financial drivers for employees to complete the toxicology studies. Interviewee 2, for example, stated that “if we’d stopped the development of compounds that were going to make \$3/4/500M. of big sales, this is what we were talking about, that would have not been a very good news”. This highlights the financial salience of employee’s job performance obligation during the WCP and the findings from agents of Tox Lab suggest that they shared the view of this obligation as a priority. For Interviewee 4, the timescale for the completion of studies provided a sense of purpose and enabled her to identify when roles would become redundant and therefore informed employee’s leaving dates. She commented that “we had to have something that we were working to, and also something that would underpin why we have the exit profile”. Therefore, the employee’s job performance obligation was salient for managing performance and HR Planning purposes during the WCP.

Based on Table 6.1, the obligation to complete toxicology studies is categorised as a transactional item. It is a priority for AgCo agents in particular because failure to fulfil this obligation would have direct financial implications as alluded to by Interviewee 2. This obligation had a specific time frame of three years and this determined the duration of the WCP which indicates a close-ended and specific time frame. The study obligation was formally written into employee’s objectives during

the WCP, as confirmed by Interviewee 4 who referred to how “it’s still on my slides there ... we had a whole list of those things and that was all signed onto by everyone, and they were everyone’s targets”. This exemplifies the formalization of the work performance obligation during the WCP. The obligation is narrow in scope because it is related to a specific toxicology study and they are tangible obligations because the procedures connected to the toxicology study have to be documented in accordance with Good Laboratory Practice (GLP).

As stated in Table 6.2, the different groups of interviewees perceived that employees fulfilled their job performance obligation during the WCP. This evaluation is supported by Interviewee 1 who was an agent of AgCo and evaluated employee fulfilment of the work obligation on a scale from 1-10 (with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent). He commented that “there was key development compounds during that, you know, the transition arrangement was at least an eight in terms of continuing to deliver for the company”. Similarly, Interviewee 4 as an agent of Tox Lab, reported that “we’ve all done it, we’ve finished the study, we had no compliance issues”.

Employees recognised this work performance obligation during the WCP. Interviewee 13 reflected that “We were committed to complete studies” which meant that employees perceived that the organisation needed them to perform their jobs in order to complete the toxicology studies during the WCP. Employees perceived that the demand for study and non-study related work continued during the WCP. Interviewee 17, for example, worked in the IT area and he reported that “genuinely we were so busy ‘cause there was I think there was there must have been well 200 or 300 different applications that we were closing down, and each one had to be tracked down, where the data was, was it kept, did AgCo South want it, could it be archived, and there was a genuinely a lot of work to do, as I say, behind closed doors, in our offices, we were just busy as normal”. Interviewee 17 was pre-occupied with the decommissioning of IT support during the WCP but it is notable that he viewed the WCP as business as normal with regards to job performance. This view is shared by Interviewee 18 who recalled that “Once I knew I was staying with Interviewee 4, it was just a matter of carrying on work as normal, job as normal”. Interviewee 15 described how she re-focused on job performance almost immediately after the announcement of the WCD, observing that “in my head, the

day after the announcement, I still had a job to do". Employees perceived that the fulfilment of their job performance obligations remained salient during the WCP. This suggests to me that employees did not demonstrate withdrawal behaviours as suggested by Tietz and Nadin (2011) following a PCV. Instead, employees reported that they continued to care about their job performance during the WCP which is an enabler of a relational type of PC and underpinned their favourable perspectives on the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP.

#### 6.2.5 Employee fulfilment of loyalty obligation

Agents of AgCo and Tox Lab regarded employee loyalty as related to intentions to stay and their compliance with management prerogative during the WCP. They perceived that they were dependent on employees' loyalty in order to deliver the business critical toxicology studies and decommission Tox Lab. Interviewee 4, for example, recalled how her priority as an agent of Tox Lab was "To keep the people that we needed, who had the skills and the expertise, to keep them here for the time that we needed them because nobody else could do it really". This view was endorsed by agents of AgCo. Interviewee 1 recognised that they were dependent on employee loyalty for the completion of the business critical toxicology studies. He explained that "it wasn't like we're turning the machines off tomorrow and you can all go home, you know, we had studies that we had to keep running for ... I think they lasted for nearly two years afterwards". Interviewee 2 recounted that "we had to protect the studies, so the AgCo study we talked about, the Japanese study that you mentioned, both of those had to be protected, so we had to make sure that we kept secured people for quite long times in Tox Lab". Therefore, employee loyalty was a pre-requisite for the completion of toxicology studies from the perspective of the agents of AgCo and Tox Lab.

Agents of Tox Lab constructed an exit profile which identified who they needed to stay until when in order to ensure completion of the toxicology studies. Interviewee 1 referred to how "this master plan was put in place as to who was going to be doing what, for how long". Agents of AgCo in particular needed employees to be loyal and stay until their designated leave date in order to deliver the studies on time and to the required quality standards. Moreover, they wanted employees to be supportive

of them and the organisation. Interviewee 1 explained that employee loyalty was part of an informal criteria which informed individual's leaving dates. He reported that "a great deal of care was taken in choosing people who had been supportive and loyal". AgCo agents perceived that they needed to retain employees to stay as long as they were required and support Tox Lab during the WCP.

Employees shared the perception that the organisation needed them to be loyal during the WCP and they interpreted loyalty to mean remaining at Tox Lab until their roles ceased to exist. Interviewee 13 confirmed that the organisation "expected people to stay". Employees understood that this was a salient need because Tox Lab employees had started a business critical study of animal testing just prior to the announcement of the WCD. Terminating the study and placing it elsewhere would have been a costly exercise for AgCo, with potential ethical and legal implications and so they needed the Tox Lab employees to stay and finish the study during the WCP. Interviewee 13 referred to how the Home Office Inspector "had experience of other places closing down, people literally have walked away, you know, and you can't do that with animal studies". This suggests that employees perceived that loyalty, as expressed through intention to stay, was a particularly salient need in the context of an animal facility laboratory.

As presented in Table 6.1, employee's loyalty obligation was a relational item. Its focus was upon the long term relationships between the employees and Tox Lab. Although Interviewee 1 referred to a "master plan" of leave dates, Interviewee 2 described how "there was some manoeuvrability in the way in which that was handled". This implies that employees were obliged to have indefinite amounts of loyalty for an open-ended time frame. If the organisation needed them to stay beyond their planned leave date, then organisational agents perceived that employees were obliged to extend their loyalty accordingly. Interviewee 6 was, however, critical of this practice, viewing it as "putting uncertainty on people". This suggests to me that there was scope for organisational agents to take advantage of employee loyalty during the WCP, although there is no perception of this in the assessment of the state of the PC. Indeed, Interviewee 6 implied that any changes to leave dates were mutually beneficial, commenting that "if you had a department of five or six people, there were probably gonna be a couple of them who, if they



could get an extra year's service in and pay and all the rest of it, it would suit them". Therefore, from the perspective of organisational agents, employee loyalty was perceived to be a legitimate obligation, even in the context of the WCP.

As indicated in Table 6.2, the different groups of interviewees perceived that employees fulfilled their loyalty obligation during the WCP. This is evident in comments from agents of AgCo such as Interviewee 1 who observed that "there was this core of people ... they were very loyal ... and they were prepared to work for that two and a half years, to wind the place up". Interviewee 1 reported that "a great deal of care was taken in choosing people who had been supportive and loyal, ... to start with". This suggests that management selected employees to stay at Tox Lab during the WCP based on their loyalty prior to the WCP, in order to minimise the risk of turnover and maximise the potential for fulfilment of this obligation. Notwithstanding this perception of fulfilment, Interviewee 4 briefly disclosed that there were instances of disloyalty which manifested itself in employees starting new employment before their termination of employment date. She explained how a policy was constructed in response to this, reporting that "the additional employment came along a bit later 'cause that started out to be ... cause us a real problem, but that was only when the announcement was out and people were trying to work for the new employer while they were still employed". This suggests to me that a specific policy encouraged fulfilment of this obligation, meaning that fulfilment by employees was not accidental or a gesture of goodwill, but rather constructed by the organisation.

Findings from employees suggest that they perceive that they fulfilled their loyalty obligation by supporting AgCo with its transition from the traditional in-house model of toxicology provision from Tox Lab to the new outsourced model supported by a small group of technical experts at AgCo South. The organisation needed the Tox Lab employees to help to make the new model of toxicology provision viable by working with and training staff at outsourced providers and new recruits at AgCo South, and by filling any gaps in knowledge and expertise. Interviewee 13 commented that "they needed you to help the transition basically". Interviewee 12 recalled that he was "travelling off to contract labs and resolving issues they had when people couldn't do what they thought they could". This suggests that he

fulfilled his obligation to be loyal by acting as a technical ambassador with third party organisations, even though he was facing job loss. Interviewee 16 recounted how she helped to train new recruits to AgCo South, recounting that “as we let people go, and there were a few people to do more mundane tasks, like study management, which is again you just study, review the interpretation and making sure you get the best thing for the company. I took it on because they hadn’t got many people within AgCo South to do that, and then help train them, so again that was quite good fun”. It is notable that Interviewee 16 was committed to securing the most favourable outcome for the organisation even during the WCP when she had been informed that her role was surplus to requirements. It is surprising that Interviewee 16 regarded training new recruits at AgCo South to do a job that she had done earlier in her career so positively. This example departs from Tietz and Nadin (2011) who suggest that employees demonstrate withdrawal behaviours, culminating in a transactional PC. Instead, employees demonstrated loyalty which is categorised as a relational obligation (Rousseau, 1995), with favourable implications for the state of the PC during the WCP.

#### 6.2.6 Employee fulfilment of flexibility obligation

Employees perceived that they were obliged to be functionally flexible during the WCP. This is evident in Interviewee 13’s observation that “most people were expected to do things that weren’t in their original job descriptions”. Employees perceived that they were obliged to complete the toxicology studies but as no new toxicology studies commenced after the announcement of the WCD, their pre-WCP jobs ceased to exist. In order for them to stay and maximise their security during the WCP, employees perceived that they needed to do different jobs which were outwith their job descriptions. Interviewee 8 recounted how her role in the WCP changed to focus more on decommissioning activities rather compared with its business support focus prior to the WCP. She explained that “The day job didn’t crop up very often and on occasion it was, oh my word, this is a day job question, they became rarer and rarer, but the involvement in the actual decommissioning team took over”. This illustrates that employees experienced a gradual shift away from their pre-WCP jobs. Interviewee 8 reported that “we were all doing things that we’d never done before ... everybody mucked in and got on with it”. Employees described how this functional flexibility entailed them undertaking different and additional jobs and

tasks. Interviewee 13, for example, commented that “I did all sorts of things ... people said that, joking saying you’re going end up cleaning the loo, but I did in the coach house, if that’s what it takes, that’s what you have to do”. This implies that employees recognised that they were obliged to be functionally flexible during the WCP as an inevitable consequence of redundancy and were willing to be functionally flexible in exchange for job security during the WCP.

It is interesting that the employees did not perceive this aspect of functional flexibility as deskilling or career regression. Interviewee 15 described how he moved away from his analytic science role into decommissioning activities during the WCP and perceived that this enabled him to “get the science out of my head, to move round the circle almost back to where I’d started from”. This implies to me that Interviewee 15 interpreted functional flexibility as an opportunity to gradually wind down and come to terms with the WCD. Similarly, Interviewee 19, who held a scientific team leader role before the WCP, reported that “I had a few months working on reception, at Tox Lab to try and ... like administration and look at that as a new option, so I thought that was good”. Interviewee 19 interpreted his obligation to work flexibly as an opportunity to enhance his employability in the external labour market. This view is shared by Interviewee 11 who did additional jobs during the WCP. She explained that “my other role was as an expert in endocrine toxicology so I said I’ll continue doing that and the compliance manager role, so that was agreed, and I carried on doing that, and then when Interviewee 4 started to put together the decommissioning teams, I then headed up the one of those teams”. In this example, Interviewee 11 held three roles but rather than regarding this as job intensification, she welcomed the opportunity to maintain her scientific knowledge in order to enhance her employability for alternative employment. She recalled that “I kept some of the science that I was doing because I wanted to do it, and I realised that if I ... I wanted to continue on with that after I’d left Tox Lab, and if I stopped doing it for two years, that would be very difficult, so I said that I wanted to carry on doing it, and they said they were happy for me to do that”. Interviewee 11 disclosed that she “would never have taken on a job as Compliance Manager because, to be frank, its quite boring really, but under these circumstances it was very different, and plus I’d worked there for so long and loved it so much, it was part of putting it all ... helping everybody to finish it”. This suggests that employees perceived that the context of the WCP constructed particular obligations for functional flexibility of which

employees were more tolerant than they might have been prior to the WCP. This tolerance enabled employees to fulfil this obligation and had favourable implications for the state of the PC during the WCP.

In summary, the different groups of interviewees perceived that employees fulfilled their obligations to stay, complete the toxicology studies and contribute to the decommissioning of Tox Lab during the WCP. Overall, these are relational obligations due to their economic and emotional focus, their evolving nature and broad scope. Employee fulfilment explains the favourable perceptions about the state of the PC during the WCP.

In the next section, I discuss the findings of different groups of interviewees regarding the organisation's fulfilment (and over-fulfilment) of its obligations during the WCP.

#### 6.2.7 Organisation fulfilment of security obligation

The different groups of interviewees perceived that in view of the timing of the WCD prior to the expiry of the lease, the organisation was obliged to provide employees with as much security as possible in the circumstances. The meaning of security was two-fold. First, it was related to employment security and entailed understanding employees' aspirations regarding their exit dates. Second, it was related to financial security which was derived from the payment of severance and pension benefits. Interviewee 6 perceived that the organisation was obliged to provide financial security as part of treating people well. He commented that "there is a genuine desire to do the right thing by people and help them bridge the gap". This suggests to me that this obligation was salient because it compensated employees for the WCD and demonstrated interpersonal justice.

Agents of AgCo perceived that the severance and pension benefits were a source of financial security for employees because they amounted to substantial amounts of money depending on age and tenure. This is confirmed by Interviewee 6 who referred to the costs to the business of the pension arrangements as being

substantial with estimates that they ran “well into six figures and beyond”. This illustrates the generosity of the pension arrangements in particular. Interviewee 1 confirmed that “there was this core of people who’d been at Tox Lab for a long time, who were in their 50’s, so they were financially gonna be secure, they were gonna get their redundancy and their pension”. AgCo agents recognised that the organisation was legally obliged to pay severance and pension benefits when employees left for the reason of redundancy during the WCP. Interviewee 6 confirmed that “we had to pay the redundancy package that we pay and we had to pay the pensions package that we have to pay”. This recognises the contractual nature of these benefits obligations. However, organisational agents perceived that these were salient benefits because they were significantly more generous than the statutory minimum requirements. Interviewee 1 referred to how employees were “financially gonna be secure, they were gonna get their redundancy and their pension”. Therefore, these obligations were salient to employees as a source of financial security at a time of employment insecurity and enabled employees to retire with financial dignity. This suggests to me that the severance and pensions were perceived by agents of AgCo as enablers of the favourable state of the PC during the WCP.

Interestingly, employees perceived that the organisation violated its job security obligations in announcing the WCD. However, they perceived that during the WCP, the organisation exceeded its obligations by enabling them to maximise their security during the WCP. Employees perceived that they needed to stay at Tox Lab for as long as possible during the WCP in order to maximise their income and restore some degree of security. Employees perceived that the long-term nature of the WCP, stretching over three years, provided scope to construct some security. Interviewee 11 remarked that he “had a job for two years so I mean, in many respects, you could take on a job for two years”. This suggests that he perceived that he got the maximum employment security that was available during the WCP which he regarded as comparable to employment security more generally in contemporary organisations. Employees perceived that they were able to influence their security through stating their aspirations to stay during the one to one consultations meetings. Interviewee 9 recalled that “they had the interviews with Managers and Personnel fairly quickly to try to understand what people’s individual

needs and aspirations were”. Interviewee 19 reported that “everyone did get what they wanted”, implying the fulfilment of security needs.

Employees perceived that this job security had financial benefits. Interviewee 19 remarked that “for that period of time, which was you know two years 18 months type of thing, you kind of knew you’re getting the salary, roof over your head”. This implies that employees modified their expectations of security during the WCP from a job for life, if not for the lease, to a job for the WCP. The perception that employees were able to state their aspirations and input into the process for determining exit dates suggests that the organisation cared about employees, listened to their views and involved them in key decisions. Moreover, Interviewee 16 described how “someone would get a job and then there were lots and lots of job swaps, particularly early on, we’ll swap with their exit dates ‘cause yes that person could do the job equally well as this one, and they’ve now said yes they’d rather stay and they’d rather leave, and you’d ... so we had lots of that which, again, I think enabled the people who were there to see we were doing what we could to make it the best for everybody”. Employees perceived that the organisation tried to accommodate changes in aspirations about exit dates. My suggestion is that this contributed to perceptions of interpersonal justice which underpinned employee’s favourable perspectives on the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP.

In addition, agents of AgCo perceived that the organisation exceeded their obligations by introducing the transitional severance arrangements in response to the anti-age discrimination legislation. This legislation was implemented in the UK just before the start of the WCP and as discussed in Chapter 2, it meant the introduction of a new contractual redundancy scheme which calculated severance pay based on length of service not age and increased the retirement age. These legislative changes had potentially detrimental implications for the Tox Lab employees due to the average age at the time of the WCD. The agents of AgCo were aware of this as confirmed by Interviewee 1 who explained that “we were right in the middle of changing the redundancy terms”. He recalled how “the decision was taken by the company that actually people would have the better of the two schemes that applied to them as an individual”. He regarded this decision as “that kind of streak of decency of doing the right thing”. Interviewee 4 agreed that “it was actually

good that they put that in place, this transitional arrangement ... I think that was the right thing for them". This suggests to me that organisational agents perceived that the transitional severance arrangements amounted to decent treatment of employees which had favourable implications for interpersonal justice and therefore the state of the PC during the WCP.

AgCo agents perceived that the organisation exceeded their obligations by enabling employees to access and maximise their pension benefits. Interviewee 2 described how some employees' leave dates were altered "to make sure if they stayed for a bit longer, they might get their pension". This suggests to me that if employees were within reach of the qualifying threshold of age 50 for unabated pension benefits, that the organisation tried to ensure that their exit date was after they had reached age 50 and therefore qualified for the unabated pension benefits. Agents of Tox Lab perceived that the organisation tried to accommodate employees staying as long as possible during the WCP in order to reach the age of 50 in order to qualify for unabated pension benefits and to maximise their pension and severance benefits through extending continuity of employment. This is confirmed by Interviewee 4 who reported that "people on the whole who wanted to stay, we were able to allow them, on the whole, to stay". This provision of security was perceived to contribute to favourable evaluations of the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP.

#### 6.2.8 Organisation's fulfilment of its obligation to communicate and consult with employees:

The different groups of interviewees perceived that the organisation was obliged to communicate and consult with employees during the WCP. From the perspective of AgCo agents, this obligation entailed communicating and consulting with key stakeholders to secure senior management support for the WCD. Interviewee 2 explained that prior to the announcement of the WCD and "during that intervening period of four/five months, obviously there was a lot of stakeholder management to do, in Basel and elsewhere, which {Interviewee 1} took care of". For Interviewee 1, this obligation also entailed communication and consultation with the employee representatives. He recalled how "I just actually went through it, here's the logic I went through". For Interviewee 6, this obligation meant working in partnership with

employee representatives to employees with transparent and consistent information. This is confirmed by Interviewee 6 who highlighted the importance of “the maintenance of the good relationship with the reps”.

For the Tox Lab agents, this obligation meant ensuring that employees had access to clear, relevant and consistent information after the WCD. Interviewee 4 referred to how “We knew the first thing these people would want to know is when am I going, and what am I getting”. This suggests to me that this was a salient obligation because it provided employees with vital information which enabled them to make plans for their futures. For Interviewee 5, this obligation meant that “you had to formally go through the same information to make sure that everybody had the information that they needed to get, they had the right pieces of paper”. This implies to me that it was a salient obligation due to the legal framework which governed communication and consultation around redundancy.

Employees perceived that the organisation was obliged to provide them with information and relevant communications to help them to plan for, and make decisions about, their futures outside of Tox Lab. Employees perceived that they needed information to aid their decision-making processes. This is evident in Interviewee 13’s comment that “anything that I had an opportunity to find out about I did”. This suggests that employees perceived that they needed information in order to make informed-decisions for the future.

Based on Table 6.1, this obligation is categorised as relational. It has both an economic and emotional focus because management wanted to ensure legal compliance but also regarded the communication and consultation process as important for sustaining functional employment relationships. It was primarily based on verbal mechanisms which were supported by written documentations where necessary which suggests that the obligation had both informal and formal elements. The obligation was dynamic because Interviewee 4 observed that management did not “know how people are gonna react, and you need to understand that ... It evolved”.



Agents of AgCo perceived over-fulfilment of this obligation. Interviewee 1 perceived that he conducted extensive and transparent communication and consultation which was in excess of what was required. He sought advice from the redeployment consultants on how to communicate the WCD to employees and reflected that “the advice that they gave on how to do that communication, was very sound and I think it set the tone for the whole closure”. Interviewee 1 perceived that when he announced the WCD, it was important for him to be transparent about his plans to move to AgCo South to start up a new part of the organisation. His view was that “you’ve just gotta be honest and upfront ... you know it’s true, it’s what’s gonna happen. You just have to say it. You just have to tell people what’s gonna happen”. He recognised that he was not obliged to inform employees about his future plans during the announcement of the WCD but perceived that he was treating employees with dignity and respect by being honest and open with them about his future plans. This suggests to me that he perceived that this had favourable implications for interpersonal justice and therefore enabled the positive state of the PC during the WCP.

Interviewee 1 perceived that he exceeded his obligation to communicate and consult with senior managers in order to secure their support for the WCD, recalling how some senior managers asserted that “this is not before time, about time, and the others sort of said are we sure this is the right thing to do, but the Research Director ... he put me through lots of tests as it were to make sure it was the right decision”. He perceived that the WCD was scrutinised and he had to defend it due to the time he took to discuss it with key stakeholders, including those who disagreed with the WCD. Interviewee 1 also perceived that he exceeded his obligation to communicate and consult with the employee representatives by talking them through the rationale for the WCD in order to help them to understand it from his perspective. He recalled how he explained to the representatives that “There’s this big financial hole. We’ve got ... what we do our projections and how much it was gonna cost to refurbish the place, then we’ve got this deadline of the lease. Is there another way out of it. Most people were, oh, you’re right”. Therefore, Interviewee 1 perceived that he exceeded his obligations to communicate and consult with senior managers prior to the announcement of the WCD, and employee representatives and Tox Lab employees at the announcement of the WCD.

Agents of Tox Lab shared this perception of over-fulfilment of this obligation. Interviewee 4 perceived that she exceeded her obligations to communicate and consult with employees in the days after the announcement of the WCD. She recalled how “we started those sessions at 7.30 in the morning, and went through until everyone had been”. This indicates that employees had access to information regardless of their working pattern. She recounted that she “did it that many times that {colleague} was laughing at me because I must have sounded like a parrot by the end of it because I needed no prompts”. Interviewee 4 perceived that she provided consistent information to all employees and was so familiar with the information that she had memorised it. Similarly, Interviewee 5 perceived that he exceeded his obligation to communicate and consult by providing employees with clear, relevant and consistent information during his one to one consultation meetings. He reflected that he “knew the information that had to be exchanged with the individual. We gave them ample time to ask questions. We tried to do it in a relaxed way”. He observed that “it went pretty smoothly” which suggests to me that he perceived fulfilment of his communication and consultation obligations. However, the scope for employees to ask questions and the relaxed approach is indicative of organisational agents exceeding their legal obligations and is consistent with treating employees with dignity and respect, thereby enhancing interpersonal justice perceptions.

Employees shared the perception that the organisation exceeded its obligation to communicate and consult with employees through the volume and quality of materials. Interviewee 16, for example, reported that they “had the debriefs and the description of what was going on”, whilst Interviewee 18 explained that they had “flip charts going through and this is what’s gonna happen and that’s what’s gonna happen, and the information was always available at any time, and it was just ... there was the intranet site set up which I.T. did”. Employees perceived that the information provided them with an overview of the WCP in an accessible manner and therefore filled an information gap in relation to their knowledge of the WCP. Employees perceived that the organisation met their need for information about their exit dates. Interviewee 19 explained that “knowing your end-date, was a big thing, because things were a bit in limbo. Once I knew I’d be there until the July ’08, I

could really start making plans then”. Information about exit dates is identified as a salient need because it provided employees with information about the duration of the PC. Interviewee 9 perceived that this information about exit dates provided “plenty of time to get your mind in gear” whilst Interviewee 12 commented that “it gave you time to make all the right decisions that I needed to make”. This suggests to me that employees perceived that the organisation provided advance notice of their exit date which had favourable implications for informational justice perceptions and contributed to their positive perspectives on the state of the PC during the WCP.

Employees perceived that the organisation exceeded their obligation to provide employees with information by communicating about alternative employment opportunities during the WCP. Interviewee 10 recalled that he “had a tap on the shoulder. I can’t remember who it was from. It was either Interviewee 1 or 2, saying that you know we’re looking for 15 or ideally 20 key people to transfer to AgCo South and your name’s in the frame”. Similarly, Interviewee 16 recounted that “It was made very clear that they would like me to move ... the following day” whilst Interviewee 22 was informed that “there’d be a job for me at AgCo South on the day of the announcement”. Interviewee 11 described how she “attended all the meetings about relocation and what the packages on offer were”. This suggests to me that employees perceived that they were well-informed about alternative employment opportunities and the relocation arrangement to enable them to make informed decisions about relocating to AgCo South at an early stage in the WCP.

Employees perceived that the organisation exceeded its obligation to provide information through its communication of pension and severance benefits. Interviewee 16 recalled how she “needed to go through and find out what I would get if I was made redundant, and what the pension might be”. Interviewee 19 explained that “there was little printouts that came out, more or less immediately, that were all ready to give out, and I thought that was good that people had something they can actually read into it, and kind of get an idea of what ... It was the financial side of it, so pension, severance ... I thought that was very well done. People knew straight away”. This suggests that employees perceived that the organisation exceeded this obligation to provide information through the detail and timing. Employees perceived that this information enabled them to understand the

financial implications of the WCD and therefore had favourable implications for informational justice perceptions, which contributed to their favourable perspectives on the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP.

Employees also highlighted a story board in the CCC which detailed the jobs that employees moved to after leaving Tox Lab as a valuable source of information. Interviewee 10 recalled “going to the career change and there was things all over the wall, you can see how the percentage of people who’d left, how many had got positions. It was always at what 90%?” This suggests that employees perceived that the sharing of information about employment successes to be encouraging and reassuring. This is supported by Interviewee 17 who commented that “it was nice to see colleagues get work ... such a person’s got this job here ... tried to convince myself that things would be alright, you know, there was life beyond the closure”. Employees perceived that the sharing of employment successes provided them with information about the possible outcomes of the WCP, which contributed to perceptions of information justice and underpinned employee’s favourable perspectives on the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP.

Together, these examples suggest that employees perceived that the organisation provided them with a plethora of information which enabled them to they required to make sense of the WCD and to plan for their futures. Moreover, employees perceived that the organisation provided such information in an accessible way. This suggested to employees that the organisation cared enough about them to engage in meaningful information exchanges, which is suggestive of a relational type of PC (Rousseau, 1995).

#### 6.2.9 Organisation fulfilment of its obligation to support employees

The different groups of interviewees perceived that the organisation was obliged to support employees with their redeployment endeavours during the WCP. From the perspective of the agents of AgCo, this entailed outsourcing. Interviewee 1 perceived that this obligation entailed paying for a team of external redeployment consultants who could provide employees with “some counselling, they could get some coaching, they could get some training”. Interviewee 6 emphasised the

professional nature of the redeployment support, describing it as “external career change provision, you know, professional help and support, there was money available for training”. This suggests to me that the obligation involved the construction of structures to support employees in enhancing their employability in order to compete in the external labour market.

Agents of Tox Lab highlighted the broad scope of this obligation, with Interviewee 4 explaining that employees “could get some counselling, they could get some coaching, they could get some training, and it was there to support them”. Interviewee 5 concurred that this obligation meant “making sure that there are funds to re-train, develop new skills”. He referred to how he “encouraged all of my staff to utilise their training budgets and to think you know very carefully about, not just what they wanted to do for a career, but to think about doing training and development in areas that maybe they hadn’t even thought about doing, but do it, anyway”. This suggests to me that this obligation meant developing skills in order to enhance employability in the labour market.

Agents of both AgCo and Tox Lab perceived that this was a salient obligation due to the support it provided for employees during the lengthy WCP. This is supported by Interviewee 4 who recalled how she thought “it would significantly help these people getting through this long closure period by having that support”. Interviewee 1 observed that the redeployment support “had two great effects, a) it benefited the people going through it, and b) it does help the people that stay”. This suggests to me that this obligation was salient because it supported leavers and could help to re-engage survivors. This view was shared by Interviewee 6 who commented that “there’s something around making the employee relation side which is the remaining employees feel more secure that says I know this can happen, and hey, it is just happening now, but I feel a degree of comfort that, if it does happen, I will be supported in that way as well”. As a HR practitioner, Interviewee 6 highlights the salience of this obligation for surviving employees. Interviewee 4 also perceived that it was salient in enhancing leaver’s employability. She reported that the intention was “to give the employees all the redeployment support that they needed, so that they could go on and find alternative employment in a reasonable timescale”.

Employees did not expect to be facing job loss in 2006 and perceived that the organisation was obliged to support them with their loss and enhance their employability. This is supported by Interviewee 19's comment that "If you're making such a profound effect on someone's life, then you know you've really got to support them". Employees perceived that the organisation was obliged to provide them with practical and emotional support including redeployment, re-training and support networks to help employees with job loss. Employees perceived a need for support with their job searching activities to enhance their employability in the external labour market. The long service of the employees' meant that some employees had never worked anywhere else whilst others had been at Tox Lab for the majority of their careers, meaning that employees did not regard themselves as conversant with the latest trends in job applications. For example, Interviewee 20 reflected that "I hadn't done a CV for 15 years. Some people had never had a CV, so I mean what do you do ... I wouldn't have known that, you know, and how you word things, and what they're looking for, and as I say, it was just the support we got". This illustrates how this obligation was particularly salient to employees with long service in the context of the WCP.

Based on Table 6.1, the obligation to support employees is categorised as a relational obligation. It had both an economic and emotional focus. It was based on providing employees with the financial resources to support them with their redeployment activities but also the emotional support to be able to discuss their future plans and concerns with independent external professionals in confidence. Employees had open-ended access to the redeployment support during the WCP as confirmed by Interviewee 4 who reported that "We've had people who've had hundreds of sessions". The shape of the support was dynamic, as confirmed by Interviewee 4 who reflected that the redeployment consultants were "not prescriptive, they leave it to you".

As presented in Table 6.2, there is consensus that the organisation exceeded its obligation to support employees during the WCP, particularly with regards to redeployment support. Agents of AgCo perceived that the organisation had invested heavily in redeployment support, with Interviewee 1 commenting that "support

systems that AgCo had put in place, places people could meet, and so on, so you know, I think they do ... they spent a lot of money on it". This suggests that the expense of the redeployment support during the WCP was evidence of the organisation exceeding its obligation. Interviewee 2 described the redeployment support as "superb" which implies that it exceeded his expectations. He commented that employees at other AgCo workplaces which were downsizing "got absolutely nothing like this ... there was no career change centre at all". This suggests that the organisation was not obliged to provide any redeployment support but in the case of Tox Lab, opted to provide substantial redeployment support.

Interviewee 6 agreed that the organisation exceeded its obligation to provide redeployment support, stating that "if you're gonna be made redundant, there ain't many better places to be made redundant from in terms of the support you get". He referred to how the redeployment support at Tox Lab exceeded the norm, stating that "redundancy isn't an unusual situation and most people have the tales of you know in on Friday, told I was finishing on Monday, what support did you get, well, not a lot ... and our people then relate their stories and people can't believe that". This suggests that the organisation exceeded its obligation to provide redeployment support in comparison with other external organisations. This view of the organisation exceeding its obligation to support employees is evident in the perspective of the agents of Tox Lab. Interviewee 4 commented that "If you look anywhere else, it really is gold plated". This is supported by Interviewee 5 who observed that "there's no obligation for the employer to go to that length".

Employee's perceived that the organisation fulfilled its obligation to support them with job searching and a redeployment support network through the construction of the Career Change Centre (CCC) which was constructed shortly after the announcement of the WCD. Interviewee 19 observed that "the whole CCC area worked very well, and I think most people did get a lot out of that". Interviewee 7 agreed that "it has been a lifeline for people, and a focal point, and somewhere to congregate". Interviewee 19 highlighted the wide range of practical support which was available to employees through the CCC. He praised "the one-to-one's with the consultants, {Consultant 3} who was excellent, and it was great just being able to stop and just chat with someone, or just pop down and go on these courses, and

kind of they were a good excuse to sit round a big table with say 10 of your colleagues, who you don't chat to a lot, and kind of bounce ideas off each other, so I thought those went very well". Interviewee 19 perceived that the organisation exceeded its obligations through the breadth of practical support which was available from the CCC for employees. Interviewee 8 explained that "we've got this package where I can talk to consultants that will help me write my CV's, they'll give me courses on being self-employed". She perceived that the organisation exceeded its obligation to support employees during the WCP through the provision of CV writing and self-employment training. Interviewee 15 also commented on the training provided by the CCC, stating that "one of the biggest things I found helpful was the courses that were put in place".

Employees particularly highlighted the generosity of the redeployment policy which suggests to me that this contributed to the perception that the organisation exceeded its support obligations. As detailed in Chapter 2, the redeployment policies entitled every employee to unlimited access to individual consultations with external redeployment consultants, unlimited access to training courses, a notional re-training fund of £5,000 per employee, a desk top computer to enable employees to undertake job searching from home and a minimum of three months full time job searching on full pay from the date on which their role ceased to exist. Interviewee 9 asserted that "it has cost the company an awful lot" whilst Interviewee 14 commented that "The support, the consultants, the whole infrastructure, all the courses, I can't see it ever happening again because it must have been expensive". Interviewee 17 described the redeployment policy as "almost like a fairy story really isn't it" whilst Interviewee 20 remarked that "we've had all this time and money spent on us, so it was really appreciated". These comments suggest to me that employees perceived that the generosity of the redeployment policies was evidence of good treatment by the organisation, which contributed to perceptions of interpersonal justice and therefore favourable perspectives on the state of the PC during the WCP.

Employees perceived that they were treated very well by the organisation during the WCP, particularly in comparison with other organisations. Interviewee 12 observed that "the support we got from Tox Lab was extremely good, I mean I know from my wife who was made redundant a few years before, and the support from her



company was useless and non-existent, terrible". This perception that the organisation was more supportive of its employees than other organisations were of their employees in a redundancy situation had favourable implications for justice perceptions. Moreover, employees perceived that the organisation treated employees more sensitively than other organisations in similar situations, even though it was not legally obliged to do so. Interviewee 11 referred to how "you hear of places where people are told that everybody's leaving and its leave your desks and walk out of the building ... Or a text! You know, you saw people down at Canary Wharf walking out with boxes didn't you, and looking totally shell shocked". Similarly, Interviewee 13 referred to how "you hear of some places, you know, set the fire alarm off, get them all out in the car park, and tell them then". This perception of more favourable and supportive treatment compared with friends, family and cases reported in the media had favourable implications for justice perceptions and contributed to employees' favourable perspectives on the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP.

Employees also highlighted the generosity of the retraining policy. Interviewee 10 described how "everyone had a pot of money ... that they were notionally allocated for training or whatever they wanted to do". Interviewee 19 surmised that this training fund "was great and it gave people an opportunity to try something they maybe wouldn't do". Interviewee 14 recounted how she used the training funds to do "web design courses", whilst Interviewee 21 reflected that she had "had a couple of interviews but I was unsuccessful because I didn't have some of the qualifications they needed, but hence AgCo paid for me to get one of them, a Health & Safety, IOSH, which is now on my CV". This exemplifies how employees used the training fund to enhance their employability in the labour market. Employees perceived that the organisation exceeded its support obligations through the investment of substantial resources into the redeployment support and interpreted this as good treatment, which contributed to positive interpersonal justice perceptions and favourable perspectives on the state of the PC during the WCP.

Employees perceived that the CCC was a source of emotional as well as practical support. Interviewee 8 recounted how "the consultants could take people through this almost grieving process, you know, of losing your job and you know blaming

everybody or getting angry". This suggests that the CC consultants supported employees' emotionally to cope with job loss. Interviewee 8 described how additional specialist sources of support were available to employees depending on their needs during the WCP. She explained that "if anybody's showing signs of you know stress and depression or anything like that, you actually have got avenues to send them for further support". This suggested to employees that the organisation cared about their mental and physical well-being during the WCP which is consistent with a relational type of PC (Rousseau, 1995).

Employees perceived that the organisation exceeded its support obligation through the provision of an extensive engagement policy during the WCP. Employees perceived that the engagement policy was intended to achieve three main goals. First, it was intended to boost morale. Interviewee 8 observed that "the whole programme of staff engagement during that time I think was essential in keeping the morale up". Second, employees perceived that the engagement policy was intended to construct a sense of community. Interviewee 18 explained that as "the building was emptying, and quite often you'd have a little pocket of people in one place, and a little pocket of people there, and you know, all scattered about, or behind the barriers, like in QA, all working their little socks off, but not seeing anybody else, and just talking within themselves about well we're gonna be out of work, blah blah blah, and I think it was a way of bringing people together and proving that there were other people in the building, all doing something". Third, employees perceived that the engagement policy was intended to reduce the risk of sabotage to the business critical toxicology studies by trying to construct a climate which was conducive to happiness at work, even during a WCP.

Interviewee 14 was part of a team involved in the planning of the engagement events and confirmed that they had "been organising the events, to keep people happy". Interviewee 8 reflected that "the risk of something being done deliberately was quite high, and that's why the staff engagement was so important". She claimed that "the whole programme of staff engagement during that time I think was essential in keeping the morale up, preventing any malicious acts that, as far as I'm aware, none ever happened". Employees perceived that the organisation invested substantial resources in trying to sustain their engagement during the WCP through events

which contributed fun at work, despite the WCP context. Interviewee 13 reflected that “it was a nice thing to do. We didn’t have to do it ... I don’t know of anywhere else that’s done things like that”. This suggests to me that the engagement activities were welcomed by employees, constitute evidence of the organisation exceeding its obligations to support employees during the WCP and contributed to employee’s favourable perspectives on the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP.

In conjunction with emotional support derived from redeployment consultants, employees perceived that emotional support was available from parting ceremonies. Interviewee 15 recalled how a leaving party functioned as a coping mechanism. She recognised that this would be her last visit to Tox Lab and she recounted how “it was a nice do, but it was kind of tinged with sadness. The end of that do I thought, right, this is the last time I’m ever going to see Tox Lab, and walk in through it, and I walked through the lab, and it was weird ... I went absolutely everywhere. I went all the places I’d ever worked. I went all round every single lab, office, and I walked round the whole of the building, and then I left through the front door, and oh ... ha ha! I thought why have I put myself through that, why did I do that, but I kind of had to do it ... A kind of closure”. This suggests that the leaving party had therapeutic benefits for Interviewee 15 which helped her to cope with the WCD. Interviewee 20 described how employees constructed a parting ceremony when they turned off the lights at Tox Lab. She explained that Interviewee 4 “organised a final gathering in the tea bar, when we were closing down, so people came back and we had a little buffet, and then we took photos of Interviewee 4, switching the lights off”. She perceived that this was evidence that “people were thought about”. Such parting ceremonies also constructed support networks amongst employees. Interviewee 14 recalled how they had “all left the building at the same time” and reported that such events “really helped us”. Employees perceived that the organisation constructed parting ceremonies which provided support networks for employees and were further evidence of the organisation exceeding its support obligations during the WCP.

A number of employees referred to a commemorative journal which the organisation produced and sent to all former employees towards the end of the WCP. Interviewee 15 was particularly touched by this document and described how she “went through

it, page by page, read it, cover to cover, looked at all the pictures, quite a lot of them I'd provided, but went through all of them and I just had sat there with tears streaming down my face, 'cause it was such a fantastic record, I couldn't believe what a brilliant ... such a brilliant job that they'd done on it ... Wonderful wonderful record, and that would never happen at most places". This suggests that this document was perceived to be an appropriate testimonial to Tox Lab and a source of emotional support to employees by enabling them to celebrate the past. Interviewee 14 shared the positive evaluation of the commemorative journal stating that "It's great. I can't believe it. You would never get that anywhere else". Employees perceived that through the production of this commemorative journal, the organisation exceeded its obligations to support employees during the WCP. The comprehensive nature of these support mechanisms is consistent with a relational type of PC (Rousseau, 1995), though nonetheless, surprising in the context of a WCP.

The findings from the CCCs indicate that they were (pleasantly) surprised at the level of investment in supporting employees during the WCP. Interviewee 24 commented that he "couldn't think of an example where staff have been treated as well in terms of their outplacement and support pending outplacement as at Tox Lab". He endorsed the view that the organisation exceeded its obligations to support employees during the WCP, stating that "AgCo went significantly beyond what they had to do to help with the closure, particularly when compared with other companies". Similarly, Interviewee 23 reflected that she "didn't know what else they could have done". This indicates that the different groups of interviewees perceived that the organisation exceeded its obligations in the support that it provided for employees during the WCP which contributed to perceptions of interpersonal justice and favourable perspectives on the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP.

#### 6.2.10 Organisation fulfilment of obligation to recognise and reward good performance

Agents of AgCo perceived that the organisation was obliged to recognise and reward good performance during the WCP. This perception was evident in a shift away from the global performance management system which was designed to

reward high performance through the application of a forced distribution performance management system, towards a performance management system centred around employee's achieving rather than exceeding their targets. Interviewee 2 reflected that "We were very pragmatic. We were not going to introduce or to continue with the distributions in performance management, for example, you know, we were gonna recognise that under the circumstances people were at least doing a good job, and in some cases were doing a better than good job". Organisational agents perceived that this obligation had a different meaning within the exceptional context of a WCP. Interviewee 2 perceived that it entailed making allowances for the possibly unfavourable implications of this context for employees' performance and to evaluate performance based on a different system.

Interestingly, agents of AgCo wanted to use Company awards to publically recognise the good performance of Tox Lab during the WCP. However, the agents of Tox Lab and the employees resisted this idea. Interviewee 4 explained that "the perception was the company wanted a pat on the back for closing a facility. Here's all these happy people who are delivering {Toxicology study}, it's the next block buster for AgCo, they're losing their jobs, and yet looking at the way they're performing". Interviewee 4 reported how "they got Interviewee 1 to try and twist my arm up my back to do it, and I said no. People don't want it and that's what matters here, as far as I'm concerned, we're not doing it". From the perspective of the Tox Lab agents, reward and recognition of good performance meant adjustment of the Performance Management System to recognise the predicament of the Tox Lab employees.

Based on Table 6.1, the obligation to reward good performance is categorised as transactional. It had potential economic benefits for employees specifically during the time-frame of the WCP. It was a static obligation and it was tangible because of its links to the salary and bonus payment. Each employees received written confirmation of amendments to their salary and confirmation of any bonus payments.

As indicated in Table 6.2, AgCo agents perceived that the organisation fulfilled its obligation to recognise good performance during the WCP. Interviewee 2 recognised that “under the circumstances people were at least doing a good job, and in some cases were doing a better than good job”. From the perspective of the agents of Tox Lab, the fulfilment of this obligation was an important contributor to the positive state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. Interviewee 4 recalled how they introduced “a new performance model that rates everybody at the same level”. She regarded this to be a salient obligation for two reasons. First, as part of treating people fairly, with dignity and respect. Interviewee 4 commented that she did not want to label employees “who’d pulled their guts out” during the WCP, as poor performers. She reasoned that employees “don’t need to be beaten up all the time”. This implies to me that she perceived that employees had enough anxiety and upset to contend with during the WCP without the additional burden of a forced distribution performance management system, designed to drive high performance. Second, Interviewee 4 perceived that the revised performance management system helped to construct a sense of community at Tox Lab. She explained that “we are a single community that have got this single goal of doing this job really really well”. From her perspective, a forced distribution performance management system would have been divisive and undermined the sense of community as Tox Lab during the WCP.

From the perspective of employees, the organisation fulfilled and in some respects, exceeded this obligation. They did not perceive that the global performance management system, which recognised high performance, was an appropriate vehicle for rewarding and recognising performance during the WCP. Employees highlighted the organisation’s amendment of the performance management system during the WCP as evidence of the organisation exceeding its obligation to recognise good performance. Interviewee 13 explained that due to the forced distribution, “You had to have the 25% at the bottom, the 25% at the top. You had to rank them. That was always difficult anyway”. She recalled how after the announcement of WCD, “they eventually said that it would be impossible because there was no way they were gonna put people into lower quartile ... you can’t expect to put people in that bottom bit, so I think they did right to just say its gonna be across the board”. This illustrates how the organisation modified the rules governing performance management to replace forced distribution which was intended to drive high performance, with a standard evaluation of performance which was applied

across all employees. Employees perceived that it would have been unreasonable to drive high performance by labelling a proportion of the workforce as underperforming after they had been informed that Tox Lab was closing and that their roles would be redundant. This modification enhanced perceptions of interpersonal justice and therefore contributed to employee's favourable perspectives on the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP.

Moreover, Interviewee 18 recalled how the organisation exceeded their obligations to recognise good performance through recognition mechanisms. She recounted that on completion of the last study all employees were given "a bottle of something and a box of chocolates, and a team of us actually spent about two days wrapping these up in cellophane in the assemblage you know getting it all ready, and everybody was amazed that the company was sort of giving these things out, but it wasn't much, but it was a thank you you know for the effort people were putting in, and staying focused on the job, even though they knew they were losing their job". This suggests that employees were pleasantly surprised that the organisation recognised their contributions in the context of their impending job loss which implies to me that employees perceived that the organisation exceeded its obligations. Employees interpreted this as sensitive behaviour which contributed to perceptions of interpersonal justice perceptions and underpinned employee's favourable perspectives on the state of the PC during the WCP.

In summary, the findings from the different groups of interviewees indicate their perception that during the WCP, the organisation fulfilled its obligations to support employees through rewards and benefits, redeployment expertise, communication and consultation mechanisms. In common with the employee's obligations, the organisation's obligations indicate a relational type of PC principally due to their focus on supporting employees' financially and emotionally and their dynamic nature. This perception of the fulfilment of a relational type of PC during the WCP differs from Rousseau (1995) who associates the WC context with a transitional type of PC. Rousseau's (1995) comparison of a relational and transitional type of PC suggests that a relational type is more desirable for employees and the organisation. My argument is that the different groups of interviewees perceived fulfilment of a relational PC at Tox Lab during the WCP, with some perceptions of over-fulfilment

of obligations by the organisation to employees during the WCP which had favourable implications for interpersonal justice perceptions and was a contributory factor for their surprisingly positive evaluation of the state of the PC at Tox Lab. In the next section I discuss how a change in leadership was also perceived to have favourable implications for justice and was identified by the different groups of interviewees as a contributory factor to the surprisingly positive state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP.

#### 6.2.11 Explanatory factor: Justice derived from a leadership change

The different groups of interviewees identified the transfer of leadership from Interviewee 1 to Interviewee 4 as a contributory factor to the positive state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. AgCo agents perceived that the leadership style of Interviewee 4 was conducive to favourable justice perceptions. Interviewee 1 announced the WCD in his role as Tox Lab Director and during the announcement, informed employees that he was moving to AgCo South to set up a new part of the organisation and would be handing over his leadership responsibilities to Interviewee 4 for the duration of the WCP. Interviewee 6 asserted that “I do think it would not have gone anywhere near as well without {Interviewee 4}, absolutely sort of knowing what was going on, holding things together”. When asked to explain the surprisingly positive state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP, Interviewee 2, commented that “the biggest factor of all is Interviewee 4”. This suggests that Interviewee 4 was perceived to be influential in creating and sustaining a positive PC at Tox Lab during the WCP.

Agents of AgCo perceived that Interviewee 4 had a management style that was conducive to treating employees well and building a positive Employment Relations climate. Interviewee 2 referred to “Her personality, her energy, the experience that she’d had prior to closure with making Tox Lab a fun place to work in, ... She’d already got a track record and an experience of providing a better environment in which people can work”. This endorsement of her management style suggests that Interviewee 4 was trusted by management colleagues. This is supported by Interviewee 1 who reflected that he “was incredibly lucky to have {Interviewee 4} to do it, to have someone that people trusted ... ‘cause she’s in the same boat”.



Interviewee 1 perceived that employees trusted Interviewee 4 to treat them fairly because she could empathise with, and understand, their predicament. This sense of trust between Interviewee 4 and the employees is evident in the findings from employees. Indeed, Interviewee 8 reported that “the staff in Tox Lab actually trusted her, which they wouldn’t have done with some of the others”. This suggests to me that Interviewee 4’s appointment as leader during the WCP inspired trust in employees which underpinned a relational PC and contributed to their favourable perspectives on the state of the PC during the WCP.

From the perspective of Interviewee 4 as an agent of Tox Lab, people were the organisation’s most important asset. When she was informed of her leadership responsibilities for Tox Lab during the WCP, Interviewee 4 regarded the employees as her main priority because “the people were so precious”. This suggests to me that she valued employees which had favourable implications for interpersonal justice during the WCP. Interviewee 4 perceived that she was responsible for Tox Lab employees during the WCP, recalling how “I did really feel that these people were now my people, and I had to do the absolute best for them”. This implies to me that she wanted to treat them well which implies to me that her appointment had favourable implications for interpersonal justice perceptions during the WCP. Interviewee 4 recounted her experiences of downsizing on a smaller scale with a previous employer. She described how “everyone else went with a little box and a letter, right, and they went straight away ... and the sabotage that we had was second to none”. This previous experience had shaped her belief that “you need to treat people well”.

One of the key ways in which Interviewee 4’s leadership style was evident was a series of employees engagement initiatives during the WCP. Prior to the announcement of the WCD, Interviewee 4 had led such initiatives which were designed to enable employees to identify and connect more with AgCo. She re-started engagement activities during the WCP, but they were based around the theme of employee health and wellbeing. She explained that the rationale was that “We’re working in a very stressful situation, we’ve got this closure, we’ve got all our colleagues are going, we’re all doing different jobs, we need to look after ourselves”. This exemplifies how Interviewee 4 prioritised good treatment of employees during

the WCP. The employee engagement activities included subsidised Pilates, free lunches, ice skating and a mini Olympics event. Interviewee 4 surmised that “if you’ve got these activities for people, they can’t sit and wallow in what’s happening to them can they ‘cause they are having a bit of a laugh, and it’s fun to come to work”. This suggests to me that Interviewee 4 had a people-centred approach to leadership which believed that construction of a positive working environment during the WCP would be mutually beneficial, in distracting employees and promoting a sense of community amongst the remaining Tox Lab employees.

In her view, a sense of community promoted performance benefits for the organisation. She argued that “if you’ve got a community that are all working together towards a common purpose, then they’re gonna achieve better, and more, and higher performing, and feel happier in themselves, and therefore happy workforce perform better”. The implication is that her leadership style, which encouraged a positive working environment and promoted a sense of community, underpinned the fulfilment of employee’s work obligations. Interviewee 1 remarked that during the WCP, Tox Lab “didn’t look like different from any other workplace. I thought some of those schemes she had were if you worked on a Friday morning to help empty the archives, you got fish and chips for lunch, that kind of thing. She put a lot of effort into keeping the community spirit going. That deserves a huge amount of credit for that”. Therefore, the appointment of Interviewee 4 to lead the WCP was a key enabler of the positive state of the Tox Lab PC during the WCP because her leadership style was conducive to enhancing interpersonal justice perceptions and employee’s fulfilment of their work obligations.

From the perspective of the employees, Interviewee 4 was highly regarded as a leader by her followers during the WCP. This is confirmed by Interviewee 20 who reflected that “We were definitely left with the best boss! Definitely out of all the people that we had there, they couldn’t have chosen a better person to run that de-commissioning”. Employees perceived her to be the best person for the job because she cared about the employees and Tox Lab and wanted to do a good job of the WCP. Interviewee 8 commented that “she actually does care” whilst Interviewee 14 suggested that “it made it a lot lot easier for many people, because she cared”. Interviewee 19 agreed that Interviewee 4 “helped a lot as well because she’s that

kind of personality, making sure people were sorted, making sure people were okay". Employees perceived that Interviewee 4 cared about them and trusted her to treat them well during the WCP with favourable implications for interpersonal justice and therefore the state of the PC during the WCP.

In addition to perceiving that Interviewee 4 cared about them and would treat them well, employees perceived that she cared about Tox Lab and wanted to do a good job of the WCP. Interviewee 20 referred to how she "knew everybody and the building and what it meant to everybody" which suggests that she was perceived to be empathetic to employees. Interviewee 16 commented that "she does everything so well" which implies that employees had confidence in her ability to manage the WCP. Interviewee 12 recounted how "she kept it very structured and she did make sure we followed what was meant to be done". Interviewee 15 commented that the WCP "was done with a lot of thought and a good high-level plan". This suggests that employees trusted her to plan and manage the WCP carefully and thoughtfully. This perception of care suggests to me that her appointment was an enabler of the relational PC during the WCP and contributed to employee's favourable perspectives on the state of the PC during the WCP.

In summary, the different groups of interviewees perceived that the state of the PC during the WCP at Tox Lab was positive due to factors which moderated the detrimental implications of PCV and justice perceptions. From the perspective of the agents of AgCo, this single PC which was in a surprisingly positive state forms their view of the implications of the PCB for the PC. In contrast, this was a partial perspective for the agents of Tox Lab and the employees due to their perception of dual PCs. As I elaborate upon in the following section, the agents of Tox Lab and the employees held a less favourable perspective on the state of the AgCo PC during the WCP.

### **6.3 Perspectives of Tox Lab agents and employees on the state of the AgCo PC during the WCP**

Tox Lab agents and employees held a more complex and mixed perspective on the state of the PC during the WCP, compared to the AgCo agents (supported by the findings from the CCCs). The AgCo agents perceived that the announcement of the WCD signalled the end of the AgCo PC. Indeed, Interviewee 1 recalled how he consciously “took the decision to try and almost wall Tox Lab off rather than try to integrate it”. He explained that his purpose was to “Try to get separation as quickly as you can, you know, don’t kind of keep Tox Lab as part of the new organisation, then gradually remove it”. This suggests that he did not perceive that there was an ongoing PC between Tox Lab employees and AgCo during the WCP. This elaborates upon Tietz and Nadin (2011) who suggested that employees adopt a transactional PC in response to a PCV because this suggests that organisational agents adopted a more transactional orientation towards employees in the wake of the PCV. Interviewee 1 perceived that during the WCP, the Tox Lab employees had a single PC with Tox Lab as a specific and distinct entity, and that this Tox Lab PC flourished during the WCP due to interpersonal justice perceptions, organisational and individual enablers. This presents a straightforward and positive view of the state of the PC during the WCP.

In contrast, the Tox Lab agents and employees perceived dual PCs during the WCP; an AgCo PC and a Tox Lab PC. Unlike Interviewee 1, Interviewee 4 perceived that she and Tox Lab employees continued to have obligations towards AgCo during the WCP. From her perspective, “we were still part of AgCo”. This indicates to me that she perceived an AgCo PC although she explained that “People wanted to divorce themselves from AgCo”. This implies that employees did not want to continue their relationship with AgCo during the WCP. Indeed, Interviewee 4’s surmised that the mood of employees towards AgCo was “sod off, leave us to it, we know what we’re doing, we always have done, we don’t need you”. This is a sharp contrast to the positive state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP and supports my claim that from the perspective of the Tox Lab agents, the state of the PC during the WCP was complex and mixed.

Although Interviewee 4 referred to how employees wanted to distance themselves from AgCo, the findings from employees indicated a perception that AgCo was obliged to support them during the WCP. This is evident in Interviewee 19's assertion that "the company owed effectively a duty of care to the staff". This supports my claim that employees perceived that AgCo was still obliged to care for them during the WCP and in other words, to sustain a relational PC. Interviewee 19 explained that employees "didn't want to see the redundancies and closures and in an ideal world they shouldn't have happened, but you know, things do, so if they happen, then you know, you've got to be a responsible employer and you know take that care on". This indicates to me that employees perceived that the organisation was obliged to care for and support employees during the WCP.

Employees perceived that AgCo was obliged to provide employees with emotional support during the WCP. The emotional support was the physical presence of Interviewee 1 and 2 returning to Tox Lab to see how they were coping and to provide them with re-assurance and demonstrate that they cared about them. This is supported by Interviewee 20 who observed that "It would have been nice to think maybe for him to come back at some stage and say, oh, how are things going ... hope it works out well kind of thing". This suggests to me that employees wanted to continue a relational PC with AgCo but perceived that AgCo and its agents violated this obligation. Interviewee 21 recalled that "when it was announced, all the Section Heads buggered off ... they just left and the first meeting I think it was Interviewee 1 who got up and said we've got jobs so that didn't go down very well, but they all left, and they never came back". Employees perceived that the agents of AgCo, and Interviewee 1 in particular, severed their ties with Tox Lab with immediate effect from the announcement of the WCD and that this left a void of senior management support. Interviewee 20 perceived that Interviewee 1 in particular, violated AgCo's obligation to provide emotional support because "he was like the Director". Interviewee 21 described how "when a couple of them did, they just snuck in and didn't come back and say hi guys, you know, I'll have a cup of tea, or how are you doing, no, not once ... I just couldn't understand it. I still can't now. When they came back, it wasn't to see their teams, it was business, they didn't even go to the labs". Employees perceived that AgCo agents had ceased to care about them and were predominantly interested in business transactions rather than people interactions during the WCP. This is consistent with my argument that employees perceived that

AgCo shifted towards a more transactional PC with employees during the WCP. The consequences of this PCV are discussed in relation to Research Objective (3).

Although employees wanted to distance themselves from AgCo, Interviewee 4 described how “as the Senior Manager here, I had a real problem with that”. Interviewee 4 realised their *raison d’être* during the WCP was to complete business critical tox studies for AgCo. She recalled informing employees that “it was really all around the delivery of {toxicology study}, that’s why we’re here guys”. The delivery of the business critical toxicology studies informed employee’s objectives during the WCP. Interviewee 4 recalled how she “set the objectives, with the management team, so we sat and we said well what are we doing, and why are we doing it, and that was it, and it was, it was to complete all of those studies ... for AgCo to the timeline”. The timescale for completing the toxicology studies informed her rationale for determining leave dates, providing her with “something that would underpin why we have the exit profile”. Interviewee 4 perceived that Tox Lab employees were obliged to complete toxicology studies, which suggests a work obligation towards AgCo. In accordance with Table 5.5., this is categorised as a transactional item. There was consensus amongst organisational agents that employees fulfilled this obligation. From Interviewee 4’s perspective, the AgCo PC was predominantly about the fulfilment of work obligations which indicates a transactional type of PC. This is consistent with Tietz and Nadin (2011).

This perception of a transactional AgCo PC is further supported by the nature of the relationship between Interviewee 4 and AgCo, which is predominantly of a financial nature. She described how she was dependent upon AgCo for the budget to support the WCP, explaining that the AgCo Financial Controller had identified a “whole budget that they’d got the Board to sign off”. This total budget included severance and pension costs, costs associated with closing the building and the costs of the redeployment providers. However, the engagement activities that characterised her management style and were regarded as contributing to the positive state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP, involved her requesting funds from AgCo. She recounted how “I used to have to take a business case so I could get some budget”. This indicates to me that she perceived that the AgCo PC was of a financial nature. This is supported by Interviewee 1 who remained Interviewee 4’s line manager and

reported that his main role in this capacity “was usually getting resources”. This implies to me that the AgCo PC was transactional – it was short term for the duration of the WCP, it was based on the completion of specific work and it was a financial relationship sustained through necessity rather than choice. The deal was that employees fulfilled their work obligations, in exchange for which, AgCo would finance their support through the WCP.

Therefore, Tox Lab agents and employees perceived dual PCs during the WCP. They perceived that the state of the Tox Lab PC was positive due to the parties fulfilling and exceeding their (relational) obligations to each other along with justice perceptions and enablers. In comparison, Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that AgCo and its agents violated their relational obligation to provide direct support to employees during the WCP with detrimental implications for the state of the AgCo PC during the WCP. My explanation for this is that AgCo shifted towards a more transactional orientation towards employees in the wake of the PCV, which is an interesting variation of Tietz and Nadin’s (2011) claim that employees shift towards a more transactional orientation towards their employer after a PCV.

The next chapter presents the findings from the different groups of interviewees in relation to Research Objective (3).

## **Chapter 7: Findings in relation to Research Objective (3)**

### **7.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings from the different groups of interviewees in relation to Research Objective (3) which is stated below:

**Research Objective (3) To evaluate perspectives on the outcomes of the PC during the WCP.**

As depicted in the summary table of findings (see Chapter 5 Table 5.3), the different groups of interviewees perceived that the WCD was a PCB. As I discussed in

Chapter 3, Zhao *et al*'s (2007) meta-analysis associated PCB with the following outcomes:

<b>Negative affective reactions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anger, frustration</li><li>• Mistrust</li></ul>
<b>Detrimental impact on work attitudes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Job dissatisfaction</li><li>• Reduced organisational commitment</li><li>• Increased tendency to leave</li></ul>
<b>Detrimental impact on work behaviours:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Withdrawal of OCB</li><li>• Reduced in-role job performance</li></ul>

**Table 7.1: Impact of PCB on work-related outcomes (Adapted from Zhao et al, 2007)**

Table 7.1 suggests that the outcomes of the PC during the WCP will be perceived to be negative due to the perception of the WCD as a PCB. Interestingly, contrary to Zhao et al (2007), all the different groups of interviewees perceived that outcomes from the Tox Lab PC during the WCP were positive. This is reflected in the AgCo agents' evaluation of the outcomes of the PC during the WCP as positive with the findings suggesting that this outcome can be explained by the norm of reciprocity. Whilst agents of Tox Lab and employees shared the positive evaluation of the outcomes of the Tox Lab PC, they reported negative outcomes arising from the AgCo PC during the WCP. Therefore, the positive and negative outcomes are reflected in their evaluation of mixed outcomes from the PC during the WCP. Notwithstanding their more negative perspectives on the outcomes of the AgCo PC, I argue that the overall evaluation of the outcomes of the PC from Tox Lab agents



and employees was favourable due to the rule of proximity and the absence of spillover between the dual PCs.

## 7.2. Positive outcomes from the Tox Lab PC

The findings from the different groups of interviewee indicated that they perceived positive attitudinal and behavioural consequences from the Tox Lab PC during the WCP as summarised in Table 7.2 below:

<b>Work attitudes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Job satisfaction</b></li><li>• <b>Commitment to Tox Lab</b></li><li>• <b>Desire to stay</b></li></ul>
<b>Work behaviours:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Good in-role job performance</b></li><li>• <b>Organisational                      Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)</b></li></ul>

**Table 7.2: Summary of the findings of the different groups of interviewees on the outcomes of the PC during the WCP**

In the next section, I present the evidence to support the findings presented in Table 7.2. Following on from this, the perceptions of less favourable consequences from the AgCo PC are presented in Table 7.3.

### 7.2.1 Job satisfaction

The different groups of interviewees reported job satisfaction during the WCP which is contrary to Zhao *et al* (2007) who associated PCB with job dissatisfaction. Agents of AgCo perceived that job satisfaction was a positive outcome of the Tox Lab PC

during the WCP for them in their capacity as both employees and managers. First, as employees, they derived job satisfaction from what they regarded as the good management of the WCP. Interviewee 1 gained job satisfaction from making, announcing and explaining the WCD and ensuring that the WCP was conducted in what he considered to be an appropriate way. He reported that “I’m quite proud of it. That I had the courage to do it. And I had the courage to take the responsibility and keep the responsibility long enough to make sure it was done properly, and I didn’t deflect the responsibility away to anybody else”. For Interviewee 2, the job satisfaction was a consequence of the new organisation that was constructed after the WCD. He referred to how Interviewee 1 stated at his retirement speech that “his proudest time has actually been the last three years when he’s been building up a new organisation”. Interviewee 2 concurred with this view, commenting that “I’ve actually felt that we’ve created something that’s at least as good as we had when Tox Lab was at its best”. This suggests that Interviewee 2 gained job satisfaction from the new opportunities which were available during the WCP.

Second, AgCo agents gained job satisfaction in their management capacity from observing employees taking advantage of the opportunities that were available to them during the WCP. Interviewee 2 confirmed that he heard “good stories about people securing interesting new opportunities”. He observed that for some Tox Lab employees “it was initially a loss, an emotional loss, it was actually, in some cases, they said it’s the best thing that’s happened to me ... now I have to do something different, and so I’ve got this great opportunity”. This suggests that management derived satisfaction from observing employees shift from being devastated about the WCD to turning the situation around to pursue different career paths.

Similarly, agents of Tox Lab reported multiple sources of job satisfaction. Interviewee 4 perceived that she gained job satisfaction from her development during the WCP. At the outset of the WCP, Interviewee 4 recounted how “I started feeling oh I’m the boss, I’m in charge, I can do it, without interference the way I wanna do it, I very quickly came down to earth after that I think, and that’s an absolute shit job and you’re taking two years out of your career, you’re losing two years”. She reflected that she “wasn’t expecting to feel as fulfilled through doing it and working with the people”. This suggests that Interviewee 4 anticipated the job

dissatisfaction suggested by Zhao et al (2007) but contrary to her expectations, experienced job satisfaction during the WCP. She confirmed that “I’ve never thought I wish someone else could do this, or I hate doing this, or I can’t bear doing this, it’s never been that, ... It’s been challenging, learning”. This indicates how Interviewee 4 perceived that she had gained professional experience from the WCP and interpreted it as a source of job satisfaction, contrary to her expectations at the outset of the WC process. In a similar vein, Interviewee 5 gained job satisfaction from the conduct of the consultation procedures. He reflected that “I hate to say I enjoyed it. What I enjoyed about it, and its an enjoy with a small ‘e’, is I enjoyed the fact that everybody I knew was getting the right information ... So it was actually fulfilling as an individual, as a manager, to know that it had been done right”. Interviewees 1 and 5 both appear to be apologetically satisfied with their respective contributions to the WCP and both emphasise the satisfaction from what they consider to be a job well done.

Interviewee 4 reported job satisfaction from the collective efforts of the Tox Lab employees in achieving the objectives of the WCP. She observed that “what we were asked to do in the timescale that we were set, for the budget that we were given, we’ve done, and it might sound awful, but we’ve done it, we’ve all done it, we’ve finished the study, we had no compliance issues”. As with Interviewee 1, there is an apologetic undertone to this reflection which suggests to me that agents of AgCo and Tox Lab perceived job satisfaction to be an unintended consequence of the WCP.

The findings from employees indicate that they experienced job satisfaction during the WCP. Interviewee 8, for example, commented that “I didn’t really find it that much different. I didn’t stop enjoying coming to work ... “I was still enjoying what I was doing”. This implies that her job satisfaction endured during the WCP and that the PCB did not particularly reduce her job satisfaction. Employees perceived that they derived job satisfaction from new and varied challenges, more responsibility and a job well done. Interviewee 13 reported that she “did all sorts of things. In a way it was interesting”. This view of the work during the WCP as interesting is shared by Interviewee 11 who remarked that “We all did jobs that we weren’t ... that we would never have been given in the outside world because we were there and part

of the closure and we picked it up and we did it, and I ... it was something entirely different and really really ... and actually really really interesting, so I was very pleased actually with the role that I had". This suggests to me that employees derived job satisfaction from interesting work during the WCP.

Interviewee 16 perceived that the WCP re-framed her work, stating that "it was all new, and certainly the management was different. You're doing a completely different management role in that way. You're still trying to develop people, but not specifically for the job they're in, but it's for their next job, and helping them think about what they're trying to do, so in that sense, it's quite refreshing because, quite often, with people, you know you're not gonna do much with them in their current job. They're not going anywhere. They've been there for you know 20 years, so now you're gonna think about something else and so helping them think about other things was quite fun". Interviewee 16 gained satisfaction from having less constrained discussions with employees about their future career plans. For Interviewee 17, the work was interesting during the WCP because it provided him with opportunities to use the latest technology in his field. He explained that "we also had to use new technology, such as the Virtualisation, which was out new, which is currently king of the block, so we virtualised a lot of our applications that we had at Tox Lab, which was new technology to us, so as part of the closure, we used these technologies for us, so we were still learning new stuff". He gained job satisfaction from developing new skills through the use of new technology during the WCP.

Employees also derived job satisfaction from increased responsibilities during the WCP. Interviewee 21 recounted that she "did enjoy the jobs I was given and more responsibilities and things like that, as the numbers went down". Employees welcomed the additional responsibilities from roles vacated during the WCP. Interviewee 13 described how the relocation of her manager to AgCo South provided her with additional responsibilities. She recalled how "he knew that he'd have the opportunity to go down south, then I would have more responsibility to basically shut the unit down". This suggests that Interviewee 13 had access to promotion opportunities that might not have been available but for the WCP and that Interviewee 13 gained satisfaction from being able to operate at a higher level. Interestingly, employees do not mention whether these additional responsibilities

attracted additional remuneration. However, it can be inferred that employees gained satisfaction from the status associated with their additional responsibilities. Interviewee 11, for example, explained that “we all moved down into all the best offices and I had an office that I would never have had. Which was a fabulous office with fantastic new furniture and a chair that was massive, and it was great to go into that every day”. This suggests that employees gained satisfaction from taking on more responsibilities, including those commensurate with roles at a higher level within the organisational hierarchy.

Employees reported job satisfaction from the fulfilment of their job responsibilities during the WCP. Interviewee 7 described this as “job satisfaction from a job well done”. Interviewee 22 was part of a team who were responsible for emptying each laboratory within Tox Lab and he commented that “it was nice to see an empty lab when you finally got one”. He gained job satisfaction from completing his job. Interviewee 8 shared this sense of satisfaction from the fulfilment of responsibilities during the WCP. She reflected that “we actually did what we set out to do. We had deadlines to meet and we met them, and what needed to be done, got done, and everybody mucked in and got on with it”. She gained job satisfaction from the fulfilment of responsibilities and the manner in which the fulfilment occurred. Meanwhile, Interviewee 18 referred to “getting satisfaction about closing it, clearing it out, making sure it’s all done, getting rid of all the bits that belong to us, and organising the deliveries and collections”. This suggests that she perceived the WCP to be therapeutic and gained satisfaction from the practical involvement in the decommissioning process.

These reports of job satisfaction during the WCP are contrary to Zhao et al (2007) who claim that job dissatisfaction is a consequence of PCB.

### 7.2.2 Commitment to Tox Lab

Zhao et al (2007: 651) describe organisational commitment as “the strength of an individual’s identification with and attachment to an organisation”. The different groups of interviewees perceived that during the WCP, employees’ were committed to the place, the people and the excellent reputation of Tox Lab. The agents of AgCo

regarded employee's commitment to Tox Lab as a double-edged sword. Interviewee 2 could understand the commitment to Tox Lab and reflected that "a lot of people were like me, they'd spent a lot of their career in that place, and there was a huge emotional attachment to the place". However, Interviewee 2 was responsible for resourcing the new part of the organisation in AgCo South and held discussions with employees to try to persuade them to relocate. He perceived that employees' emotional attachment to Tox Lab was a barrier to them relocating to AgCo South. He commented that he "completely underestimated ... those emotional ties" in trying to resource the new organisation during the WCP and had to undertake substantial external recruitment. This illustrates the strength of commitment of employees to Tox Lab as a workplace which endured during the WCP.

In addition to the commitment to the place and the people, the agents of AgCo perceived that the employees were committed to the reputation of Tox Lab during the WCP. Interviewee 3 asserted that Tox Lab had a strong reputation independent from AgCo, describing how it "was recognised in its own right". This suggests that Tox Lab management and employees were proud of its excellent reputation. This is supported by Interviewee 6 who commented that "Tox Lab had built up an excellent reputation, not only in AgCo, but in the broader scientific world, over whatever 30 or 40 year period, and people felt proud of that and didn't want to do anything to jeopardise that". AgCo agents perceived that employees were committed to maintaining the excellent reputation of Tox Lab during the WCP.

Employees perceived that commitment to Tox Lab was a positive consequence of the PC during the WCP. Interviewee 15 stated that "I had Tox Lab through me like a stick of rock" which indicates a deep allegiance to Tox Lab. Interviewee 11 recalled that prior to the WCP, "We'd have a big move to make us part of AgCo as a whole ... when AgCo was formed, and so we tried very hard to move Tox Lab to be part of that rather than a bit of an outpost, and I think we succeeded in doing that, but then when the closure was announced we'd sort of close back in on ourselves and become a bit more of an island". This suggests that employees commitment to Tox Lab underpinned their more superficial commitment to AgCo. Interviewee 14 even expected her commitment to Tox Lab to endure into subsequent employment. She stated that "when you go to another job, ... I'm just gonna go, do my work, and come

home, you know, because we have so many social events, it won't be the same people, I'll just go, do my work, and come home ... you're not like committed to that company, like you were Tox Lab".

These findings of commitment to Tox Lab during the WCP are contrary to Zhao et al (2007) who associate employee responses to a breach of the PC with reduced organisational commitment.

### 7.2.3 Desire to stay

The findings from different groups of interviewees indicate a desire to stay at Tox Lab during the WCP. From the perspective of the Tox Lab agents, this was a pleasant surprise. Prior to the WC announcement, Interviewee 4 expressed concern that "people are gonna go, 'cause they're gonna go find something else. They're gonna move. They're gonna lose everybody". However, Interviewee 4 recalled how after the announcement of the WCD, employees "all said to me that you would like to stay and see this through to the end ... That's fantastic". She perceived that temporary workers wanted to stay until the end of the WCP which is surprising given their employment status which is inevitably more precarious than that of permanent employees and less likely to stimulate intentions to stay. Interviewee 4 remarked that she "had a lot of like contractors were very very concerned whether they'd be able to stay till the end, or whether they had to go immediately". This implies to me that they wanted to stay until the end of the WCP and that they did not want to go immediately after the announcement of the WCD and feared that they might be at risk of this due to their temporary status. In the aftermath of the announcement of the WCD, Interviewee 4 described how employees were so eager to stay at Tox Lab until the end of the WCP, that they were willing to whatever was required to stay. She recalled how an employee had asked her "what do you want me to do, I'll do anything you want me to do. If you want me to clean the toilets ...". Although Interviewee 4 feared that employees would intend to quit, which would have been consistent with Zhao et al (2007), she perceived that employees intended and wanted to stay at Tox Lab until the end of the WCP.

This is evident in the findings from the employees who reported that they wanted to stay at Tox Lab during the WCP. Employees explained that they loved their jobs and would not have left voluntarily. Interviewee 20 stated that “I thought it was great, and I wouldn’t have left. If I hadn’t have been made redundant I’d probably still be there now actually”. Similarly, Interviewee 18 remarked that she “Didn’t intend going anywhere else ... if they hadn’t have got rid of me, I wouldn’t have gone anywhere, so I’d still be doing the job that I want to be doing”. This suggests that, but for the WCD in 2006, employees perceived that they would still be at Tox Lab.

Employees reported a desire to stay during the WCP. Interviewee 22 commented that “I was quite happy to stay right till the end”. Interviewee 13 recalled that “I didn’t really want to go ... I wanted to stay. Any job”. Interviewee 13 was willing to do any job that the organisation needed her to do in exchange for staying at Tox Lab during the WCP. It should be noted that employees recognised the financial benefits of staying during the WCP. Interviewee 14 highlighted the salary benefits of staying during the WCP, stating that “We’ve had our wages and that for ... So we’d have been on quarter of the wage that we were on here, if we’d have left”. Interviewee 9 explained that he had agreed to stay longer during the WCP because “that was associated with an increase in salary, of £5000, so an increase of £5,000 means bigger pension ... a bigger redundancy pay out, so quite happily accepted that”. However, in addition to the financial incentives to stay, employees referred to emotional drivers to stay. Interviewee 11, for example, described how “I wanted to stay in a way, I mean I would still be there obviously, but I wanted to stay because I wanted to be there ... didn’t really want to go home, didn’t really want to ... I just didn’t want to leave really”. Interviewee 14 referred to how she would like to stay longer, joking that “I’m hoping they’ll add another nine months for us so we can stay a bit longer!” This exemplifies employee’s desire to stay at Tox Lab during the WCP.

Interestingly, even though some of the employees had left and moved on to alternative employment outside of Tox Lab, they commented that they still wanted to return and stay at Tox Lab, even though after the end of the WCP. Interviewee 15 confirmed that she “would have liked to have been back at Tox Lab” and reflected that “I still ... I keep coming here ... I chose to come here today”. She surmised that “a fair proportion ... of people who worked at Tox Lab would say yes, they’d have it



all back tomorrow”. This suggests that the PCB did not reduce employee’s intention to stay but rather prompted a desire to stay as long as possible for financial and emotional reasons. This is exemplified by Interviewee 21 who stated that “it’s the best job I’ve ever had”. She wanted to retain this job that she rated so highly for as long as possible and, contrary to Zhao et al (2007), the PCB did not reduce this desire to stay.

#### 7.2.4 Job performance

Zhao et al (2007) suggest that in response to a PCB, employees will reduce their in-role job performance. However, the findings from the different groups of interviewees depart from Zhao et al (2007). Agents of AgCo perceived that employees maintained their job performance during the WCP. Interviewee 2 reported that “The company did keep delivering through it all”. From their perspective, this was not accidental but was part of the good management of the WCP. Interviewee 1 confirmed that “a great deal of care was taken in choosing people’s termination dates ... it wasn’t like oh well there’s three people there, well we’ll organise it such that the one that has never been the best performer ends up there the longest”. This reduced the possibility of the negative work behaviours identified by Zhao et al (2007) because the employees who remained during the WCP, were those who agents of AgCo regarded as good performers.

Interestingly, agents of Tox Lab reported enhanced in-role job performance in some employees during the WCP. Interviewee 4 observed an employee who, after the announcement of the WCD, “switched like that and he was one of the best people ... He was fantastic. Nothing was too much trouble”. This was not an isolated case, as Interviewee 4 described how a team of employees, with a track record of being difficult to manage prior to the WCP, “turned their bloody performance around ... They actually turned out to be my little shining stars”. The notion of problematic employees turning their performance around during a WCP is counter-intuitive and contrary to Zhao et al (2007).

This finding of enhanced in-role job performance from agents of Tox Lab is consistent with reports from employees of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

(OCB). Employees demonstrated OCB by working overtime during the WCP in order to complete work. Interviewee 7 observed that “people you know were still working overtime getting their work done”. Employees described how they were willing to help to resolve organisational problems even though their roles were surplus to requirements. Interviewee 7 recounted “I just offered to do it ‘cause even though you know I’d been made redundant ... you’ve got to make sure there’s a smooth transition and just get on with it, so you know it wasn’t an offence to be asked to do that”. Employees did not perceive that the WCD had a detrimental impact on their willingness to demonstrate OCB.

Employees perceived that OCB was evident in employees returning to work on a voluntary basis after they had left or retired from Tox Lab. Interviewee 18 described how “{Employee X} came in after he’d finished to make sure the final bits and pieces were done ... {Employee Y} came in, {Employee Z}, they came back up to Tox Lab to make sure that everything was alright after they’d gone. Interviewee 8 did a lot of that. She actually came in for the last day for the deep store run, from Tox Lab, so all the final boxes going out, and she actually pushed the cage, now she didn’t need to do that, ‘cause she wasn’t working for us any longer”. These are examples of employees contributing discretionary efforts for no tangible reward.

As reported by agents of Tox Lab, employees perceived that people who had not demonstrated OCB prior to the WCP started to demonstrate OCB during the WCP. Interviewee 14 commented that “before the announcement, none of the engineers would come to any of our events. Whereas they were always first there”. This suggests that employees detected an increase in OCB in some employees. This evidence suggests to me that the PCB did not have a detrimental impact on OCB, and for some employees, it may have been a catalyst for OCB which is a surprising outcome for the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP.

The findings from employees identified job performance as a positive outcome of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. Interviewee 8 reported that “We had deadlines to meet and we met them, and what needed to be done, got done”. This view is shared by Interviewee 9 who reported that “the work was all completed to time and

to schedule”. Interestingly, Interviewee 16 recalled how the deadline for the final toxicology study during the WCP was moved forward, stating that “it was gonna be on time until they then said we need it early”. She confirmed that “It was delivered early ... we’d never done one early before”. Employees perceived that they maintained their performance levels to the extent that they were able to meet revised deadlines during the WCP. Employees perceived that performance met quality standards during the WCP. Interviewee 13 reflected that “I don’t remember actually sort of killing off or getting rid of any studies early”. This implies that the quality of job performance did not deteriorate during the WCP. This is supported by Interviewee 16 who reported that “we were able to maintain a level of care and desire to do the job in most people, which was tremendous in the circumstances”. It is surprising that job performance was characterised by care and desire during the WCP. This is contrary to Zhao et al (2007) who associate PCB with reduced in-role job performance.

Findings from employees suggest that positive job performance outcomes were enabled by less intense workloads. Interviewee 19, for example, reflected that “I was still doing the same job, just less work because of no new studies coming in, and as that two years went by, or probably 18 months after knowing the end-date, there was less work to do, so it did give you more time to kind of look for other jobs, and do the career change thing”. He still had the same job title and the same salary but noted that there was less work for him to do during the WCP. Employee reported reduced levels of stress at work during the WCP. Interviewee 14 reported that “it’s not been like a really stressful job for the past three years ... It’ll be hard at another job, having someone telling you what to do! Having to work for a living!”

Employees perceived that they were liberated from corporate initiatives during the WCP. Interviewee 11 explained that “we weren’t subject to all the sort of large corporate initiatives that we always had to go through, like the frameworks initiative and you know everything that was ... all the target setting that starts from Board level to that goes down to the floor sweepers and everything, and so all of that, although we had to do it to some extent, there was no way that we did it in the way that we’d had to have done it before, and all that was really refreshing actually because it’s a total pain, so doing that was really nice”. Employees did not feel

compelled to engage fully with corporate initiatives such as performance management and reported that they were able to concentrate fully on their roles and job performance. Interviewee 15 reflected that “it was nice to be free of these, because you do have to believe in it, because if you don’t then you know, it makes life difficult doesn’t it”. This suggests that the PCB rendered engagement with corporate initiatives redundant with beneficial consequences for employee perceptions of job performance.

Therefore, the outcomes of the Tox Lab PC including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, intention to stay and good in-role job performance which were perceived by the different groups of interviewees are surprising and contrary to conventional wisdom.

### 7.3 Outcomes of the AgCo PC

As discussed in relation to Research Objective (2), Tox Lab agents and employees perceived dual PCs during the WCP, comprising a Tox Lab PC and an AgCo PC. The findings from both of these groups of interviewees indicate that the perceived the state and the outcomes of the Tox Lab PC to be positive compared with more negatives state and outcomes from the AgCo PC. These negative outcomes are summarised in Table 7.3 below:

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#### Work attitudes:

- **Anger and upset**
- **Frustration**
- **Mistrust**

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*Table 7.3: Perspectives of Tox Lab agents and employees on the outcomes of the AgCo PC*

The negative outcomes presented in Table 7.3 are partially consistent with some of the negative outcomes identified by Zhao et al (2007), although my argument is that

these negative outcomes were contained within the AgCo PC due to the rule of proximity and the spillover effect. In the next sections, I present the evidence to support these claims.

### 7.3.1 Negative consequences: Anger and upset

As depicted in Table 7.3, Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that anger and upset were negative consequences arising from the AgCo PC during the WCP. Tox Lab agents perceived that employees were particularly angry and upset with AgCo and Interviewees 1 and 2 as agents of AgCo and the WCD. Interviewee 4 relayed how employees attributed the WCD to AgCo and its agents, referring to their perception that “you’ve made me redundant”. From her perspective, their response “was a two fingers to the organisation” which illustrates how their anger was directed towards AgCo. Interviewee 4 perceived that employees were angry and upset that AgCo was continuing whilst they were in the process of closing. She recalled that when she was submitting a business case for additional funds from AgCo during the WCP, she had “to be creative to AgCo, and the budget process, if you like, about why we were doing this, to try and link it in some way to what we were doing, rather than it to be the ongoing business, because they felt it was like a slap in the face”. Interviewee 4 perceived that employees were angry and upset about the predicament they found themselves in and did not want to be reminded about the rest of AgCo carrying on with business as usual whilst their business world had been torn apart because that would compound their anger and upset.

The direction of anger towards AgCo and its agents was confirmed by Interviewee 2. He perceived that he was the object of anger from some Tox Lab employees, stating that “even two or three years after that event, some people you know were very angry with me”. These feelings of anger were evident within the findings from employees. Employees were angry that senior management from Tox Lab and AgCo neglected them during the WCP. Interviewee 18 remarked that “it would have been nice if somebody had have come ... we became the forgotten people ... they just didn’t come near us for ages”. Similarly, Interviewee 21 expressed her anger that “we were just cast aside”. Employees were angry about Interviewee 2’s insensitivity on the final day of the WCP. Interviewee 20 explained that Interviewee

2 “came back on the last day, and we hadn’t actually seen this person since the announcement and it wasn’t appropriate for the last day. Because he wasn’t involved anymore. He was down at AgCo South ... and he wanted to do a teleconference, well there were no phones”. Employees were angry that Interviewee 2 or the organisation collectively had not anticipated that employees would be angry with Interviewee 2 for turning up at Tox Lab on the final day of the WCP and expecting employees to attend to his needs. She recalled that “It had all been disconnected. There was no allowance for that. Nobody there to do it and that affected people ... he should have thought of that, whether it was him or AgCo or whoever told him to do it, you know, little things like that went a bit wrong”.

Interestingly, Interviewee 1 did not share this perception that employees were angry with him. He described how he “used to see people in supermarkets, and go oh my God, they’re gonna come over and shout at me, and they never did”. This indicates that Interviewee 1 worried that employees would be angry with him but instead, he reported that “all the people I met, all the responses that I got, were all very favourable”. This suggests that Interviewee 1 really did receive favourable responses from employees, or that employees still felt obliged to present their responses in a favourable way due to his seniority or that he misunderstood or misinterpreted employee’s responses.

Tox Lab agents highlighted examples of employees who demonstrated varying degrees of anger and upset during the WCP. Interviewee 4 described how a team member “was in one hell of a state” and described how the Chair of the employee representatives “was so upset”. The most extreme example is reported by Interviewee 4 who referred to a suicidal employee “who had a complete and utter breakdown ... He sent me an e-mail at 2 o’clock in the morning telling me that he just sellotaped a kitchen knife to the table and was about the throw himself on it unless I paid for his Priory stay”. She described how “he went completely psychotic ... no job, where am I gonna get a job, can’t get an interview, wife worked here as well, two of them without a job”. This example illustrates the negative consequences that arose during the WCP and though this is a more extreme example of an angry and upset employee, it was not an isolated case. Interviewee 4 reported that “Other people did need medical intervention, not many, but a significant few I would say”.

This suggests that there were instances of extreme anger and upset during the WCP which is consistent with the negative consequences of a PCB highlighted by Zhao et al (2007).

### 7.3.2 Negative consequences: Mistrust

As depicted in Table 7.3, Tox Lab agents and employees indicate that employees did not trust AgCo or its agents. Interviewee 4 confirmed that “People wanted to divorce themselves from AgCo”. This suggests that Tox Lab employees perceived that AgCo had betrayed them through the WCD and consequently, employees wanted to sever their ties during the WCP. This mistrust is evident in employee cynicism about AgCo initiatives which continued during the WCP. AgCo had a global awards system which was designed to communicate and recognise workplace achievements. Interviewee 4 described how she was strongly encouraged by AgCo senior management to submit a case study of the Tox Lab WCP for a global award, because “it was a hands-down winner”. She was reluctant to participate and sought the views of the employee representatives about this. They were disgusted at the idea because they interpreted it as AgCo celebrating the closure of Tox Lab. Interviewee 4 reported that “the perception was the company wanted a pat on the back for closing a facility. Here’s all these happy people who are delivering {key study}, it’s the next block buster for AgCo, they’re losing their jobs, and yet looking at the way they’re performing”. This illustrates how Tox Lab employees were suspicious of AgCo’s intentions during the WCP.

Tox Lab agents perceived that employees no longer trusted Interviewees 1 and 2. This is acknowledged by Interviewee 2 who reported how “they thought that we’d abandoned them”. Interviewee 4 referred to how “they’d buggered off with the paddles and left us, they’d gone down to AgCo South”. This suggests that employees felt abandoned by Interviewees 1 and 2 and could no longer trust them to look after them because they had relocated both physically and emotionally. Interviewee 4 traced back employee’s mistrust of AgCo agents to the announcement of the WCD. She surmised that “it would have been difficult for Interviewee 1 to have rescued the situation that people perceived on the day of the announcement when he handled so badly the fact that we’re alright jack and we’re bugging off”.

Employees perceived that they were misled by Interviewee 1 and 2 during the WCP. Interviewee 18 recalled how at the announcement of the WCD, Interviewee 1 “stood there and said we are all out of work. It was the way he said it, and it was ‘we’ as in ‘I am too’, and then the next day everybody finds out that of us ‘we’ have already got jobs, already know what they are going to, and could give a damn about the rest of us, or that’s the impression that was given”. Employees perceived that Interviewee 1 misled them at the announcement of the WCD into thinking that they shared a common predicament of job loss even though it transpired to be less shared than originally thought. This mistrust of Interviewee 1 in particular is consistent with Zhao et al (2007) who identified mistrust as a negative outcome associated with PCB.

The mistrust of Interviewee 2 is evident in Interviewee 4’s summary of employee reactions to his return to Tox Lab on the final day of the WCP. She recalled how “[he] thought he could turn up on our last day over there, and the staff all walked out. They asked {Tox Lab employee} to open loading bay door because they would not pass him, and that was because he’d just left it too long to come and see them”.

Interviewee 6 concurred that “there was a degree of washing of hands of I’m no longer part of ... so some of the senior guys who moved to AgCo where there was still needed to be some interactions, weren’t supportive enough of Tox Lab management”. Interviewee 4 perceived that Interviewee 1 also compounded employee’s mistrust of him by ignoring them and neglecting to visit them during the WCP. She asserted that “they left it far far too late to come back to the facility, and the longer they left it, the more ... the stronger the feeling was that people didn’t want them here, and people had said that to me, they don’t want them here, and it was one of those, it was almost like the situation was perpetuating itself”. From the perspective of Tox Lab agents, employee mistrust of AgCo and its agents was a negative outcome of the PC during the WCP.



## 7.4 Overall evaluation of the outcomes of the PC during the WCP

Notwithstanding the limited number of negative outcomes from the AgCo PC during the WCP summarised in Table 7.3, the different groups of interviewees perceived that the overall outcomes of the PC during the WCP were positive. The agents of AgCo evaluated the WCP as a success. Interviewee 1 reflected that “it’s a strange thing, I’ve put 300 people out of work, but you know, I think we did do it well”, whilst Interviewee 6 also commented that “it was handled very well ... people were treated very well”. Moreover, Interviewee 2 stated that “I don’t think the company has ever done anything like that before ... it may not ever do anything like it again. No, I don’t think they would, because I think it was expensive, and it was ... it took a long time, three years is a long time for the whole thing to come to fruition. I can’t imagine ever that we would do that in the future”. This implies to me that he perceived that the Tox Lab WCP was unique and an exemplar.

This positive evaluation of the WCP was supported by the CCCs. Interviewee 24 stated that he could not “think of anything that could have been done better”, whilst Interviewee 25 reflected that “I’ve been doing this job since 1990 and the closure at Tox Lab is the best I’ve ever seen”. Agents of Tox Lab also articulated positive views of the WCP. From Interviewee 4’s perspective, the WCD was “much better because I wasn’t expecting to feel as fulfilled ... I wasn’t expecting to get what I’ve got from it”, whilst Interviewee 5 who observed that “it was handled very very well”

Towards the end of the interview process, a number of interviewees evaluated the WCP on a scale from 1-10 with 1 being disastrous and 10 being excellent. Five out of six interviewees awarded the WCP a score of 9 out of 10 and one respondent awarded it 10 out of 10. This high rating provides further evidence of the positive evaluation of the WCP and suggests that the agents of AgCo and Tox Lab perceived it to be practically flawless. This is alluded to by Interviewee 1 who observed that “I can’t see how given what we had to do it could have been done much better”. These favourable evaluations depart from Zhao et al (2007).

My contention is that these favourable evaluations of the overall state of the PC during the WCP can be explained by the norm of reciprocity and the operation of violation across multiple PCs. With regards to the norm of reciprocity, the different groups of interviewees perceived that the organisation exceeded its obligations towards employees during the WCP which had favourable implications for justice perceptions and was reciprocated by employees, contributing to the fulfilment of a relational PC at Tox Lab with positive outcomes during the WCP. This is supported by Interviewee 6 who commented that “I do think that I know at the end of this I’m gonna get treated quite well, underlines that. No matter how much professional pride you’ve got and all those other things, if you can see coming in 12 months time the fact that someone’s just gonna turn round and say right, that’s it, that’s your finish date, off you go, see you, then you might not react in quite the same way”. Interviewee 6 perceived that employees reciprocated good treatment during the WCP and the promise of good treatment at the end of the WCP with fulfilment of their obligations during the WCP.

The norm of reciprocity serves to explain the favourable outcomes of the Tox Lab PC. However, in the case of the AgCo PC, my argument is that the norm of reciprocity operated in a more targeted way which explains the favourable evaluations of the Tox Lab PC and the less favourable evaluations of the AgCo PC. Interviewee 4 explained that at Tox Lab, the deal during the WCP “was look after them and they’ll do the job for you”. The consensus amongst the different groups of interviewees is that employees were treated very well during the WCP at Tox Lab and they positively reciprocated this good treatment with the fulfilment of their work obligations. In contrast, Tox Lab agents and employees attributed the PCV to AgCo and its agents and negatively reciprocated the PCV with mistrust, anger and frustration towards them. Although Tox Lab agents perceived that employees reciprocated the PCV attributed to AgCo with negative outcomes, they perceived that these detrimental consequences were contained within the AgCo PC and did not spillover in to the Tox Lab PC. This highlights the operation of violation within multiple PCs.

Moreover, Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that the Tox Lab PC had a stronger impact on employee’s overall evaluations of the state and outcomes of the

PC during the WCP. Interviewee 4 observed that employees “were more Tox Lab-centric” during the WCP, and explained that “they’d become this sort of closed community”. This is consistent with the rule of proximity (Marks, 2001). Marks (2001: 461) contends that the actors “perceived as being responsible for positive feelings or ‘safety’ will be seen as having the strongest or most impact on any collective psychological contract”. Employees perceived a relational PC at Tox Lab and reported that they felt cared about during the WCP which suggests that they had favourable emotions towards Tox Lab and felt safe at Tox Lab during the WCP. Employees were pre-occupied with the Tox Lab PC during the WCP and it had the strongest impact on employee’s evaluations about the implications of the WCD for the PC as exemplified by Interviewee 19’s view that “you still work to AgCo, but that wasn’t your future, but Tox Lab was the support, was there to look after you, so I think it became less about AgCo”. Employees had favourable perspectives on the state and outcomes of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP which dominated their overall evaluations because the Tox Lab PC was at the forefront of their working lives. In the background, employees perceived a secondary PC with AgCo, which they perceived was violated by the WCD. Employees perceived that AgCo compounded this PCV by adopting a more transactional orientation towards employees and in doing so, violated their obligation to provide employees with emotional support during the WCP.

Employees demonstrated emotional distress consistent with an interpretation of PCV and they perceived negative outcomes including anger and mistrust, arising from this PCV. However, these outcomes did not affect employees perceptions about the state and outcomes of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. This suggests to me that employees perceived that violation and its consequences was contained within the AgCo PC and did not impact on the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. Moreover, employees perception of fulfilment of a relational PC at Tox Lab during the WCP which meant that they felt cared for and emotionally supported. This perception of a relational PC at Tox Lab during the WCP was more salient to employees than the lack of emotional support from AgCo. This suggests to me that employees perceived that violation was contained within the secondary PC and that the Tox Lab PC had a stronger influence on employee’s overall view of the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP. This is consistent with the rule

of proximity (Marks: 2001) and suggests that the implications of a PCB may be more complex than depicted within the extant literature.

#### **7.4 Summary of findings chapters**

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 have presented the findings from the different groups of interviewees in relation to each of the three Research Objectives. The findings indicate that the AgCo agents (supported by the findings from the CCCs) constructed a more straightforward and favourable perspective on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP compared with the more complex and mixed perspective of the Tox Lab agents and employees. These different perspectives are presented in Figures 7.1 and 7.2 below. Figure 7.1 presents the perspective of the AgCo agents:

## AGCO agents

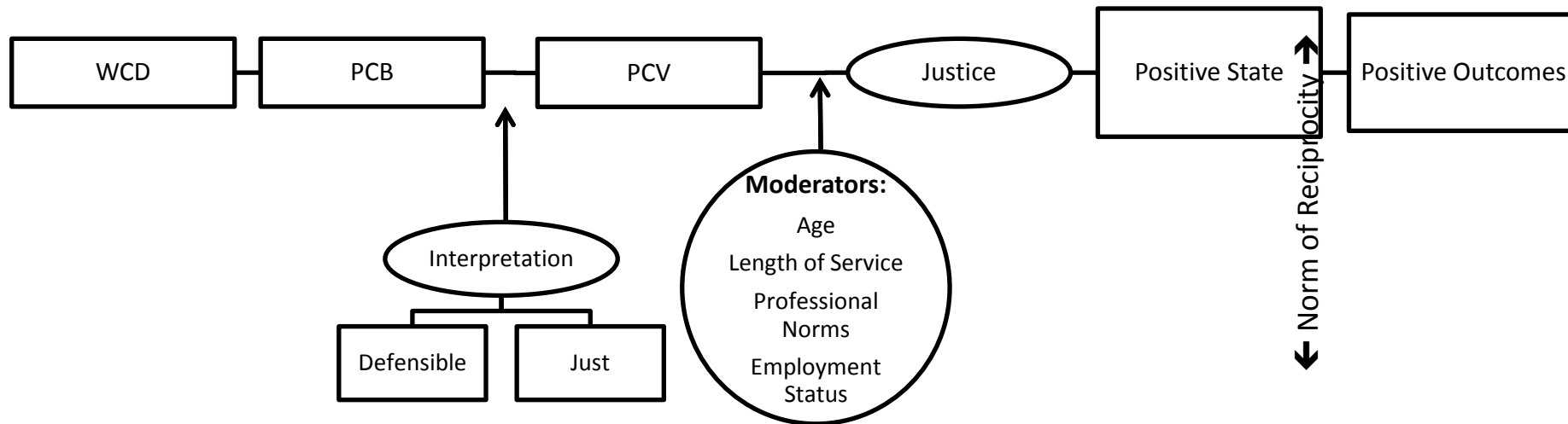


Figure 7.1: Perspective of AgCo agents on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP

Figure 7.1 summarises how the AgCo agents perceived that the WCD was a PCB which they did not interpret as a PCV due to attributions for and justice perceptions of the WCD. From their perspective, moderating factors and justice underpinned the positive state of the PC during the WCP, and contributed to the construction of a positive reciprocation dynamic by employees, evident in positive outcomes. As discussed in this chapter, the perspective of AgCo agents is positive and straightforward. In contrast, the perspective of the Tox Lab agents and employees is not entirely positive and is more complex as depicted in Figure 7.2:

## Tox Lab Agents and Employees

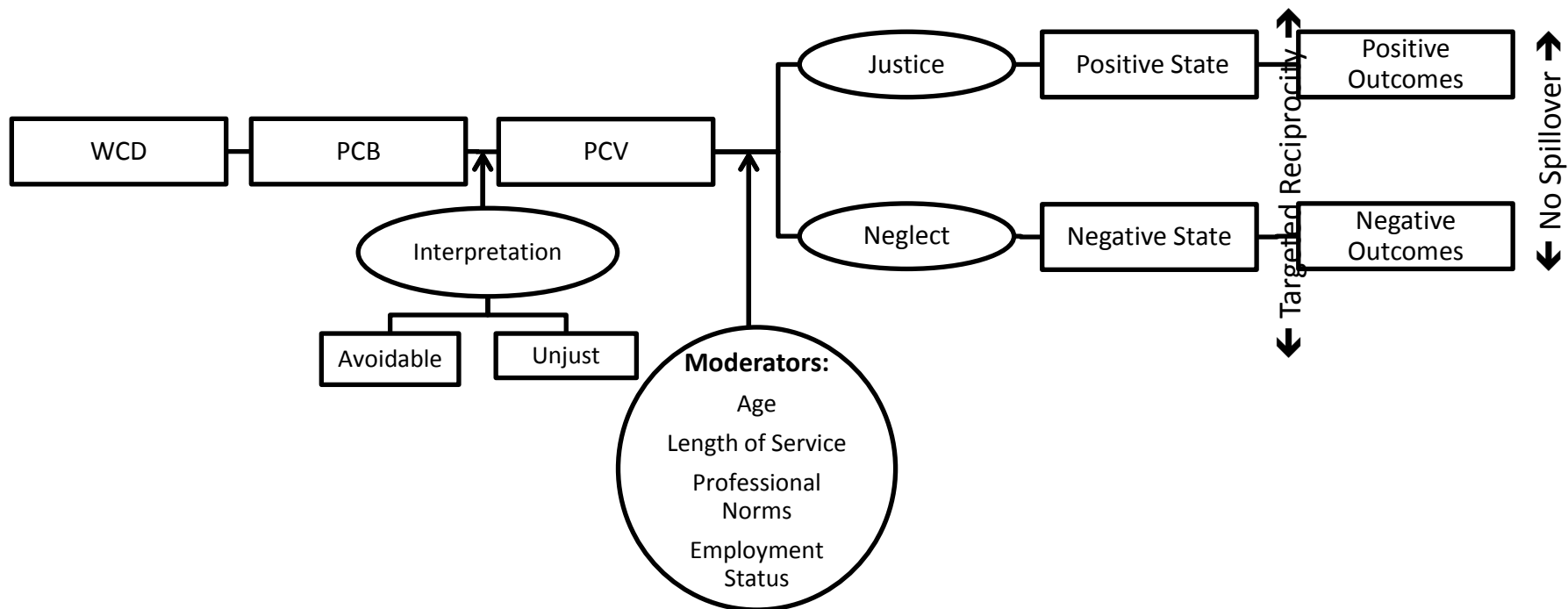


Figure 7.2: Perspective of Tox Lab agents and Employees on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP

Figure 7.2 illustrates how Tox Lab agents and employees shared the perception of the WCD as a PCB but unlike AgCo agents, they interpreted the PCB as a PCV due to attributions and perceptions of injustice. Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that the PCV constructed two distinct PCs during the WCP. They perceived that the Tox Lab PC was the primary PC which was shaped by moderators and justice which contributed to a positive state and outcomes. Moreover, they perceived that PCV was contained within the AgCo PC and exacerbated by neglect which constructed a negative reciprocity dynamic as evident in perceptions of negative state and outcomes. The Tox Lab agents perceived that violation was contained within the AgCo PC and did not spillover into the Tox Lab PC. Interestingly, they perceived that the outcomes of the Tox Lab were most salient which I argued can be explained by the rule of proximity. I argue that this accounts for their view that, notwithstanding the PCV, the detrimental implications of the WCD were surprisingly limited.

In the next chapter, I compare the perspectives of the AgCo agents with the Tox Lab agents and employees and discuss the findings in relation to the extant literature.



### **8.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I critically discuss the findings from the different groups of interviewees which were presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. The results are discussed in relation to the literature and structured around the Research Objectives outlined below:

Research objectives:

1. To understand and explain how Tox Lab management and employees interpreted the WCD, for example, as a breach of the PC (PCB) and / or violation of the PC (PCV);
2. To critically analyse management and employee perspectives on the state of the PC during a WCP, particularly in the light of any perceptions of PCB and interpretations of PCV; and
3. To evaluate management and employee perspectives on the outcomes of the PC during a WCP.

My argument is that there is consensus and disagreement between the different groups of interviewees about the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP. There is agreement about the perception of the WCD as a PCB but then discrepant perspectives on the interpretation of the PCB along with the state and outcomes of the PC during the WCP between the findings from the agents of AgCo compared with the agents of Tox Lab and the employees. AgCo agents hold the most favourable perspective on the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP although in accordance with a localist perspective in the research interview, this needs to be interpreted cautiously. My argument is that the agents of AgCo used of the research interview for political purposes to present the WCD and its implications for the PC during the WCP in a selective and favourable way due to their role as agents of the WCD. I discuss how the perspectives of Tox Lab agents and employees are less favourable than AgCo agents and more complex, but nonetheless, present a more positive perspective on the implications of a WCD for

the PC compared with the literature. I argue that my findings challenge the assumption in the literature that a PCV will have detrimental implications for the state and outcomes of the PC which supports my claim that my findings were surprising. I propose that my findings provide evidence of more complex and alternative implications of a PCV for the PC compared with the literature which can be explained by moderators, justice perceptions and the operation of PCV across multiple PCs. I discuss how this broad range of explanatory factors departs from the literature and suggest that there is scope to extend the reliance in the literature upon the norm of reciprocity.

In the following sections, these key findings are elaborated upon and discussed in relation to the literature, starting with Research Objective (1). Where there is agreement and shared perspectives, I will refer to the parties as a means of encompassing the views of the different groups of interviewees. The chapter builds towards the presentation of my framework for analysing the implications of a WCD for the PC.

### 8.1 Discussion of Research Objective (1) To understand how management and employees interpreted the WCD

Chapter 5 presented the findings from the different groups of interviewees in relation to Research Objective (1). The findings indicate that the parties used the same process to interpret the WCD. There is a consensus that the WCD was perceived to be a PCB. However, it is noticeable that AgCo agents had different attributions and justice perceptions from Tox Lab agents and employees, contributing to different interpretations of the PCB. In the following section, I elaborate upon these key points and discuss them in relation to the literature, demonstrating how my findings are consistent with the literature and highlighting which findings depart from conventional wisdom.

The parties perceived that the WCD triggered a Psychological Contract Breach (PCB). The perception of the WCD as a trigger of PCB is consistent with Zhao *et al* (2007: 650) who propose that PCB is triggered by “a significant workplace event”.

More specifically, the perception is due to the breach of obligations regarding job security. The parties recognised that the expiry date of the lease on the Tox Lab facility in 2015 was regarded as a promise of job security at least until 2015 and the announcement of the WCD in September 2006 was perceived to be a breach of this promise. The perception of the WCD as a breach of job security promises is consistent with the literature (Datta *et al*: 2010; Turnley and Feldman: 1998; Rousseau: 1995; Rousseau and Aquino: 1993).

The parties interpreted the PCB according to attribution and justice perceptions which is consistent with Robinson and Morrison's (1997) theoretical model. Interestingly, though perhaps not surprisingly, the parties held different views regarding attribution and different justice perceptions, contributing to interpretations of the PCB as a PCV by Tox Lab agents and employees and not a PCV by AgCo agents. These different interpretations support the conceptual distinction between PCB and PCV (Morrison and Robinson: 1997; Robinson and Morrison: 2000).

Attribution and justice perceptions were key in interpretations of the PCB. This is consistent with Robinson and Morrison's (2000: 532) simplified version of Morrison and Robinson's (1997) theoretical model which identified attribution and justice perceptions as "important component(s) of the interpretation process". With regards to attribution, Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that the PCB was caused by deliberate reneging on job security promises by AgCo and its agents. Tox Lab agents and employees identified Interviewee 1 and 2 as both agents of AgCo and of the WCD because they communicated the WCD and relocated away from Tox Lab to continue to work for AgCo at a different workplace in the UK, thereby physically severing their ties with Tox Lab during the WCP.

Tox Lab agents and employees referred to how the duration of the lease was common knowledge and explained that from 2005 onwards, employees had sought clarification from senior management about plans to extend the lease. They perceived that senior management had time to make plans prior to the expiry of the lease. Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that Interviewee 1 and 2 were opting to terminate the lease early rather than being asked by the landlords to leave

the Tox Lab facility prior to the expiry of the lease and were therefore intentionally reneging on a promise of job security until the expiry of the lease in 2015. Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that Interviewee 1 and 2 could have sustained Tox Lab until the expiry of the lease in 2015 and therefore avoided the PCB. Moreover, they perceived that even if they still decided to close Tox Lab, then downsizing would have been a preferable business decision compared with the WCD.

This assignment of responsibility is consistent with Morrison and Robinson (1997) who argue that assignment of responsibility is based upon causality, control, foreseeability and intentionality. Tox Lab agents and employees assigned responsibility to AgCo and Interviewee 1 and 2 as its agents because they perceived that they caused the PCB due to the WCD which they could have foreseen and controlled by acting to sustain Tox Lab until the expiry of the lease yet intentionally made the WCD knowing the devastation it would cause employees.

The attribution of the PCB to deliberate reneging by the organisation and its agents contributed to employee's interpretation of the PCB as a PCV. This is consistent with Morrison and Robinson (1997: 243) who state that "employees will experience more intense negative emotions if they attribute it to purposeful reneging". Tox Lab agents and employees attributed the purposeful reneging to AgCo and Interviewee 1 and 2 in their capacity as agents of AgCo and the WCD. Employees distinguished between Interviewee 1 and 2 as agents of AgCo and the WCD and the other senior managers who remained at Tox Lab and were agents of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. This constructed a very different relationship between employees and Interviewee 1 and 2 compared with the relationship between employees and the other managers (notably Interviewee 4). I discuss the implications of these distinctions further in relation to Research Objective (2).

AgCo agents agreed that the PCB was caused by reneging on job security promises but attributed this to inability, rather than unwillingness, to fulfil job security promises. From their perspective, the Tox Lab business model was not sustainable because they could not compete with outsource providers on low costs for short term toxicology studies. Tox Lab was unable to provide the cost-competitiveness that

AgCo needed in order to be a market leader and therefore was surplus to business requirements and unable to fulfil its job security promises. AgCo agents did not perceive that they had betrayed employees by making the WCD but rather that they had no alternative but to make the WCD. AgCo agent's attribution is consistent with Morrison and Robinson (1997: 244) who contend that "agents will rarely admit to purposeful reneging. Instead, they will often try to convince the employee that a perceived breach of contract resulted from factors beyond the organisation's control". AgCo agents perceived that they had tried to diversify in order to enhance the competitiveness of Tox Lab but their attempts had been unsuccessful, leaving them with no alternative but to close in 2006 in order to contribute to AgCo's strategy of cost-competitiveness. This is consistent with Contu *et al* (2013) and Vaara and Tienari (2008) who claims that MNCs in particular, try to legitimise controversial events such as WC, as unavoidable in the context of neo-liberal ideologies. This suggests to me that AgCo agents sought to construct a narrative around the WCD that presented their contribution favourably. This is consistent with what Morrison and Robinson (1997: 240) describe as "self-serving biases".

The parties held different perceptions about the justice of the WCD. AgCo agents perceived that the WCD was just due to honest and transparent communications and respectful treatment of employees during the announcement of the WCD and subsequently during the WCP. In contrast, Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that the WCD was unjust due to inadequate explanations, disrespectful treatment, and unfavourable outcomes. These factors influencing fairness evaluations are consistent with Robinson and Morrison (2000: 532) who argue that "honest, respect, consideration, adequate explanation" influence interpretations of a PCB, albeit, the parties held different perspectives on these factors.

Employees perceived that AgCo agents treated them with a lack of respect during the announcement of the WCD. In particular, employees objected to Interviewee 1 communicating his intention to construct a new organisation at AgCo South with Interviewee 2 whilst simultaneously informing the Tox Lab workforce of their compulsory redundancies. Interviewee 1, in contrast, perceived that he was being honest and open with employees in communicating his future plans to them during the WC announcement. From Interviewee 1's perspective, his transparency about

his future plans was effective communication which contributed to justice perceptions. This is consistent with Guest and Conway (2002) who argued that effective communication had favourable implications for justice. However, for employees, this information contributed to a sense of betrayal which is evident in employee's interpretation of the PCB as a PCV by AgCo and its agents. A number of employees perceived that AgCo and its agents provided inadequate explanations for the WCD which contributed to perceptions of injustice. This is consistent with Rousseau and Anton (1988: 284) who commented that the "explanations and reasons given for the termination do appear to impact on perceived fairness".

Employees perceived that the lease was highlighted as a reason for the WCD but were not clear about how that explained the timing of the WCD in 2006 rather than on the expiry of the lease in 2015. In addition, employees perceived that the WCD and outsourcing of toxicology was inconsistent with the performance and contribution of Tox Lab and its employees. This supports Rousseau and Anton (1988) who found that performance levels were a salient factor in determining fairness perceptions of termination decisions. Employees perceived that demand for Tox Lab's services was high, that employees' performance was high and that Tox Lab was making a valuable contribution to AgCo's overall performance. Employees did not perceive that Tox Lab was a declining or dying organisation and therefore perceived that the WCD in 2006 was unjust.

AgCo agents, on the other hand, perceived that they provided clear and logical explanations for the WCD based on the unsustainability of the Tox Lab business model. From their perspective, the narrative constructed to explain the WCD enhanced justice perceptions. However, employees were not convinced by the explanations provided by Interviewee 1 for the WCD and this contributed to their interpretation of the WCD as a PCV. This is a variation on the findings of Lester *et al* (2007: 195) who contend that if "employees believe that supervisors (or other organisational agents) are credible and provide legitimate explanations for their decisions, they will be more likely to perceive that the organization has fulfilled its psychological contract obligations". Lester *et al* (2007) assumes that credible organisational agents will construct legitimate explanations for their decisions. The employee's perspective in the case of Tox Lab challenges this assumption.

Employees perceived that Interviewee 1 and 2 were credible organisational agents but doubted the legitimacy of their explanations. This suggests that the possibility of a distinction between the credibility of organisational agents and the legitimacy of their explanations. For the employees at Tox Lab, the credibility of explanations for the PCB was more salient to perceptions of fairness than the credibility of the organisational agents.

Employees perceived that the compulsory job loss outcomes of the WCD were unfair in depriving them from achieving job security until the expiry of the lease in 2015. Some employees referred to exit plans that they had constructed based on an assumption of the expiry of the Tox Lab facility lease in 2015. Up until 2015, many employees explained that they had no desire or intention of leaving their jobs and therefore the outcome of job loss from 2006 was undesirable for them. The unfair and undesirable outcomes of the PCB contributed to employee perceptions of injustice and therefore PCV. This is consistent with Morrison and Robinson (1997: 243) who argued that “negative emotions such as anger, indignation, and contempt increase with the perceived undesirability and adverse impact of an event”. In the case of Tox Lab, the WCD was undesirable to employees and had an adverse impact on them. AgCo agents, in contrast, perceived that the majority of employees secured their desired outcomes including a career change, new job and retirement. From their perspective, the outcomes of the PCB were not necessarily undesirable for employees and they did not perceive that they had an adverse impact on them.

Therefore, in relation to Research Objective (1), the consensus is that the WCD was a PCB which is consistent with the literature (Datta *et al*: 2010; Turnley and Feldman: 1998; Rousseau: 1995; Rousseau and Aquino: 1993). The parties applied the same framework for interpreting the PCB which is consistent with Robinson and Morrison’s (1997) theoretical model in highlighting the influence of attribution and justice perceptions on the interpretation process. However, the parties had different perspectives on the attribution for, and justice of, the WCD, contributing to different interpretations of the PCB. AgCo agents did not interpret the PCB as a PCV but Tox Lab agents and employees shared an interpretation of the PCB as a PCV due to attribution for, and justice of, the WCD. The importance of justice perceptions in influencing whether the PCB is interpreted as a PCV is consistent with Morrison and

Robinson (2000) and Robinson and Morrison (1997). The results from the Tox Lab study in relation to Research Objective (1) support prior research, but also extend prior research through the provision of multiple perspectives.

Next, the implications of these interpretations are discussed in relation to Research Objective (2).

## 8.2 Research Objective (2) To critically analyse management and employee perspectives on the state of the PC during the WCP

Chapter 6 presented the findings from the different groups of interviewees in relation to Research Objective (2). The findings indicated both consensus and disagreement about the state of the PC during the WCP. The parties shared positive evaluations about the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP and explained this in relation to moderators and justice perceptions. However, the perspectives of Tox Lab agents and employees on the state of the PC during the WCP are more complex and more mixed than that of AgCo agents. In addition to their positive evaluations of the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP, Tox Lab agents and employees perceived additional PCs which they evaluated negatively. Whilst AgCo agents perceived a single PC at Tox Lab and had positive evaluations of its state, Tox Lab agents and employees perceived an AgCo PC which they evaluated more negatively than the Tox Lab PC. I elaborate upon these findings further in the following section and discuss how, despite their differences, the evaluations of all of the parties depart from the literature.

### 8.2.1 Shared perspective on the positive state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP

The findings from the different groups of interviewees shared a positive evaluation about the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. This positive evaluation about the state is counter-intuitive and depart from PC theory which proposes that “employee perceptions of psychological contract breach will result in negative outcomes for the employee and the organisation” (Conway and Briner, 2009: 97). The perspective of AgCo agents’ is diametrically opposed to PC theory because it



implies that the WCD did not have negative implications for the state of the PC during the WCP. Instead they perceived fulfilment of a single relational PC. This is contrary to Tietz and Nadin (2011) who propose that a more transactional PC will emerge in response to a PCB. Whilst the perspectives of Tox Lab agents and employee's is more complex and more mixed than that of AgCo agents and PC theory, they share the positive evaluation of the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP which departs from the literature (Conway and Briner, 2009; Tietz and Nadin: 2011).

The shared evaluation about the positive state of the PC at Tox Lab is constructed in part from the perception of fulfilment of a relational PC. This is counter-intuitive and departs from Turnley and Feldman (1998: 75) who found that managers working in the organisations undertaking re-structuring activities "were significantly more likely to feel their psychological contracts had been violated". As I discussed in relation to Research Objective (1), AgCo agents did not interpret the PCB as a PCV, in contrast to Tox Lab agents and employees. However, contrary to Turnley and Feldman (1998), my findings suggest that the state of the PC at Tox Lab was not irrevocably damaged by interpretations of PCV and recovered sufficiently to be characterised by fulfilment of a relational PC during the WCP. The perception of a relational PC during the WCP is surprising and contrary to the literature which suggests that a PCB triggers a shift towards a more transactional PC (Tietz and Nadin: 2011; Pate *et al*: 2003).

There is broad agreement between the parties about the salient obligations during the WCP; namely security, support, work delivery and loyalty. Such agreement about the salience of obligations departs from Bligh and Carsten (2005), Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000) and Herriot *et al* (1997) who found discrepant perspectives between management and employees on the salience of obligations. These studies found that managers tended to regard the relational obligations of PCs as more salient compared with employees who typically identify the more transactional obligations as more salient. In contrast to this prior research, the parties regarded the relational obligations as salient during the WCP. I suggest that this agreement between the parties during a WCP about the salient obligations is surprising as evident in its contrast with the extant literature. Moreover, it is plausible

that it is a contributory factor to the positive evaluations about the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP.

The parties perceived that the relational PC at Tox Lab was underpinned by trust during the WCP. AgCo agents perceived trust between the organisation and its employees. Employees perceived high trust relations at Tox Lab, specifically with Interviewee 4 as the key agent of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP, but interestingly with other Tox Lab colleagues. Employees perceived that they had more power during the WCP because AgCo and its agents prioritised their time and attention on the growth of a new department at AgCo South over the decline and death of Tox Lab. Employee's perception of increased power is consistent with Wigblad *et al* (2012) who found that shifting frontiers of control were particularly likely to emerge during the long term WCP. Employees perceived that they benefitted from an enlarged discretionary space during the WCP. This suggests that employee perceptions of trust during the WCP were contingent on an increase in power and discretionary space. This is consistent with Fox (1974) who argued that trust was related to power, the degree of discretionary space afforded to employees and the regulation of work and wages.

The regulation of work was subject to change during the WCP, with the deregulation of non-study related work from Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) regulations and the use of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). This deregulation provided employees with more task discretion which could help to explain employee perceptions that they were trusted by management. Interviewee 4 recognised and acknowledged her dependency on employees for the decommissioning of Tox Lab whilst employees recognised their dependency on Interviewee 4 for continued employment in order to maximise severance and pension benefits. This mutual vulnerability is consistent with Meyer's (1983) definition of trust and was conducive to high trust relations between the parties at Tox Lab which contrasts with the low trust relations that employees perceived with AgCo and its agents. This suggests that employees had different levels of trust in different levels of management which is consistent with Perry and Mankin (2007) and Mather (2011). The different levels of trust with different levels of management present a more complex view of trust

relations between the parties which is under-developed within the literature (Guest: 2004).

Furthermore, employees perceived high trust relations between the employees who remained at Tox Lab during the WCP. Employees perceived that they were all victims of the WCD and shared the same redundant predicament during the WCP. They did not perceive that they were competing with each other to stay at Tox Lab as they may have done in a selection process during a downsizing exercise. It is proposed that this shared predicament of employees stimulated a logic of solidarity at Tox Lab during the WCP. This supports Maher's (2011: 211) call to recognise "the potential for high trust to emerge between workers in response to their subordinated position" and illustrates how such solidarity can emerge during a WCP. At Tox Lab, employees were in a subordinate position due to the involuntary job loss unilaterally imposed by management. The notion of trust between employees has received limited attention in the extant literature perhaps because of the decline of collective employment relations mechanisms and the individualisation of employment relationships (Guest: 2004; Rousseau: 1995). However, the perception of trust between employees at Tox Lab during the WCP highlights limitations in the dominant conceptualisation of the PC at the level of the relationship between the individual employee and the organisation (Arnold: 1996).

### 8.2.2 Shared perspective on the explanatory factors for the positive evaluations of the state of the PC at Tox lab during the WCP

There is consensus amongst the parties that these surprisingly positive evaluations of the state of the PC during the WCP can be explained by moderators and justice perceptions. The parties identified age, tenure and professional norms as contributing to positive evaluations of the state of the PC during the WCP. The parties perceived that the mature age and long service profile of the Tox Lab employees, tied to the severance and pension benefits of being over the age of 50, provided an incentive for employees to stay and behave with moderating implications for the state of the PC during the WCP. This view of age as a moderator of the PC is consistent with the literature (Bal *et al*: 2008; Carstensen *et al*: 2003; Lockenhoff and Carstensen: 2004).

All the parties highlighted the professionalism demonstrated by employees during the WCP, evident in the completion of business critical toxicology studies on time and to the required quality standards during the WCP. Such professionalism was the norm at Tox Lab due to the highly regulated nature of animal testing in the UK and the reputation of Tox Lab as centre of international excellence for toxicology. The parties perceived an obligation to deliver toxicology studies on time and to the required standards and this obligation remained salient during the WCP. Employee's fulfilment of this obligation was regulated internally through Good Laboratory Practices (GLP), enforced by professional codes and the legal framework and subject to external scrutiny by the Home Office Inspectors. This regulatory framework which encouraged professionalism remained salient during the WCP until the completion of the toxicology studies. My suggestion is that these professional norms regulated responses to the PCV and drove employees to fulfil their obligations to the organisation during the WCP with favourable implications for the state of the PC. This suggests to me that the norm of professionalism modified the potentially detrimental implications of the PCV for the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. This departs from the literature which identified the norm of reciprocity as the dominant explanatory factor and responds to calls for the consideration of alternative explanatory mechanisms (Coyle-Shapiro and Shore: 2007).

In addition to the moderators, the parties identified justice perceptions as a key explanatory variable for their positive evaluations of the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. The parties agreed that justice perceptions were derived from the organisation exceeding its obligations towards employees during the WCP and from a change in leadership. This suggests to me that over-fulfilment of obligations was perceived to have beneficial implications for justice perceptions. This departs from the literature which suggests that over-fulfilment of obligations is rare with unclear implications, upto and including interpreting over-fulfilment as a PCV (Turnley *et al*: 2003; Guest: 1998). In contrast, this Tox Lab study suggests that the implications of over-fulfilment for the state of the PC are more favourable than depicted within the literature.

The parties agreed that the organisation exceeded its obligations to support employees during the WCP. The construction of a redeployment centre (or Career Change Centre – CCC – as it was referred to at Tox Lab) was highlighted as evidence of the organisation exceeding its obligations to support employees with favourable implications for justice perceptions and therefore the state of the PC during the WCP. This is consistent with Parzefall (2012: 805) who found that substantial outplacement support “helped to buffer against the worst and to restore the balance in the psychological contract at least to some extent”. In the case of Tox Lab, the outplacement support was regarded as comprehensive because employees had unlimited access to individual consultations with redeployment consultants, a wide range of training courses at their disposal and career counselling services.

All parties identified the generosity of the HRM policy framework as evidence of the organisation exceeding its obligations to employees during the WCP. The parties identified the key features of the HRM policy framework as generous severance and pension benefits, advanced termination of notice, financial assistance for re-training and the comprehensive redeployment support from the CCC. This policy framework contributed to perceptions of very good and fair treatment of employees by the organisation during the WCP with favourable implications for interactional justice perceptions. This HRM policy framework is consistent with what Hansson and Wigblad (2006: 939) describe as a “Social Responsible (SR) approach” to a WCP. At Tox Lab, the adoption of a SR approach was perceived to be preferable and desirable during the WCP. This departs from the literature which suggests that managers prefer a non-SR approach in order to secure the quick completion of a WCP (Wigblad *et al*, 2012).

In addition to perceiving that the organisation exceeded its obligations, the parties perceived that a leadership change at the start of the WCP was a source of positive interactional justice perceptions with favourable implications for the state of the PC during the WCP. Interviewee 4 became the Director of Tox Lab and was regarded as the agent of the Tox Lab PC and the WCP. AgCo agents perceived that she was a more appropriate person to lead Tox Lab during the WCP compared with Interviewee 1 because she was in the same redundant position as the Tox Lab

employees. The employees welcomed her appointment because they perceived that she cared about them and could support them during the WCP. The view of leadership as enhancing justice perceptions and having favourable implications for the state of the PC is consistent with the literature (Zagenczyk *et al*: 2009; Parzefall and Coyle-Shapiro: 2009).

Therefore, I have discussed how the parties had a positive evaluation of the state of the PC at Tox Lab, characterised by fulfilment of a relational PC which was explained by moderators and justice perceptions. This positive evaluation of the state overall departs from the literature which suggests that a PCB and PCV will have detrimental implications for the state as evident in a more transactional PC due to the norm of reciprocity (Tietz and Nadin: 2011; Conway and Briner: 2009). However, for AgCo agents, their evaluation of the PC was entirely based upon Tox Lab because they perceived a single PC at Tox Lab. They did not perceive that Tox Lab employees had an ongoing relationship with AgCo. This perception of a single PC is more consistent with the dominant conceptualisation of the PC (Rousseau: 1990).

### 8.2.3 Different perspectives on the state of the PC with AgCo

Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that the PCV contributed to the construction of multiple PCs with mixed implications for the state of the PC during the WCP. The perception of multiple PCs by Tox Lab agents and employees supports Marks (2001: 456) who argues that “it is more useful to replace the individual’s single psychological contract with the notion of multiple psychological contracts”. Tox Lab agents perceived that the multiple PCs were dual PCs between AgCo and Tox Lab employees on the one hand, and Tox Lab and its employees on the other hand. Interviewee 4, as agent of the Tox Lab PC, perceived that she had obligations towards her senior managers in AgCo as well as towards her subordinates at Tox Lab. This is consistent with Bligh and Carsten (2005: 506) who found that managers had bilateral PCs with both senior management and subordinates following a merger.

Employees shared this perception of multiple PCs. However, from their perspective, the multiple PCs were not dual PCs to be managed like they were perceived to be for the Tox Lab agents. For employees, the multiple PCs were of differing importance to them. They were pre-occupied with the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP and perceived this as their primary PC. They perceived a PC with AgCo but this was of secondary importance to them during the WCP. This perception of primary and secondary PCs is not evident within the literature.

Both the Tox Lab agents and employees distinguished between the state of the multiple PCs. As I discussed above, they had positive evaluations of the state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP, as evident in their perception of fulfilment of a relational PC. As with AgCo agents, they identified moderators and justice perceptions as explanatory factors. In contrast, their evaluations of the state of the AgCo were more negative, evident in the perception of fulfilment of a transactional PC, due to what they perceived to be neglect. This perception of neglect is particularly strong in the employee's perspective due to the perception that AgCo agents violated their obligation to provide employees with emotional support during the WCP. This departs from Turnley and Feldman (1998) who found that managers in re-structuring organisations perceived that organisational support obligations were exceeded. My findings suggest that there is agreement amongst all parties that Tox Lab employees were very supported emotionally and practically during the WCP. However, employees in particular perceived that AgCo agents neglected them which implies to me that a global evaluation of organisational support might be misleading, particularly when multiple PC are perceived.

The perception of a shift towards a more transactional PC in the wake of a PCB or PCV is consistent with the literature (Tietz and Nadin: 2011). The identification of neglect as an explanatory factor contributing to the negative evaluations of the state of the AgCo PC reinforces the importance of justice perceptions for evaluations of the state of the PC. This is consistent with Morrison and Robinson (1997) who argue that justice perceptions contribute to the development of a PCV. From the perspective of Tox Lab agents and employees, justice perceptions contributed to their interpretation of the WCD as a PCV which they attributed to AgCo and its agents, and perceived that AgCo and its agents compounded this PCV during the

WCP through the violation of their obligation to emotionally support employees during the WCP. Interestingly, AgCo agents perceived that they fulfilled their obligations to support Tox Lab employees during the WCP by supporting and resourcing the CCC. This effectively outsourced their obligations to emotionally support the Tox Lab employees to external redeployment consultants. From their perspective, this was beneficial for employees due to the experience, specialist skills and independence of these consultants. However, from an employee perspective, this was no substitute for personal emotional support from Interviewee 1 and 2. This highlights the multiple interpretations and different perspectives between parties about the state of the PC and supports my conceptualisation at the level of the relationship between the parties (Guest and Conway: 2002).

In summary, I have discussed how there are both similarities and differences in the perspectives of the parties on the state of the PC during the WCP. I have discussed how there is agreement about the positive state of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP which is contrary to the literature which depicts the implications of a PCB as detrimental for the state of the PC (Tietz and Nadin: 2011; Conway and Briner: 2009). I have also discussed how my findings depart from the literature in depicting a more complex view of the implications of a PCB for the state of the PC, due to the perception of multiple PCs which is consistent with Marks (2001), rather than a single PC which is consistent with Rousseau (1990).

Next, I analyse the perspectives of the parties on the outcomes of the PC during the WCP and compare them in relation to the literature.

### 8.3 Research Objective (3): To evaluate management and employee perspectives on the outcomes of the PC during the WCP

Chapter 7 presents the findings from the different groups of interviewees in relation to Research Objective (3). As with Research Objective (2), there are similarities and differences in the perspectives of the parties about the outcomes of the PC during the WCP. There is agreement that the outcomes of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP were positive. This is surprising and I discuss how this departs from the



literature. However, as with Research Objective (2), Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that the outcomes of the AgCo PC were negative. I discuss how this perspective is consistent with what the literature depicts as the outcomes of a PCB. Notwithstanding the perception of negative outcomes from the AgCo PC, I discuss how the overall assessments of outcomes are positive. I discuss how this can be explained by the rule of proximity and the spillover effect which are under-researched areas in the literature.

### 8.3.1 Shared perception of positive outcomes from the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP

The parties perceived that the outcomes of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP were positive. This is surprising given the perception of the WCD as a PCB because the literature associates perceptions of PCB with negative outcomes for the organisation and employees, particularly in relation to attitudinal consequences (Conway and Briner: 2009; Zhao *et al*: 2007; Robinson: 1995; Robinson and Rousseau: 1994). Contrary to the literature, the parties perceived that there were positive attitudinal and behavioural consequences arising from the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP including job satisfaction, commitment, desire to stay and job performance, as elaborated upon in the following section.

All parties reported that job satisfaction was an outcome of the PC during the WCP, arising from new opportunities and challenges. This departs from Zhao *et al* (2007) whose meta-analysis found a negative relationship between PCB and job satisfaction outcomes. The parties perceived that employees remained committed to the organisation due to their emotional attachment to Tox Lab and recognised that it was in their interests to stay and fulfil their obligations during the WCP due to their eligibility for substantial severance and pension benefits. This is consistent with what Mayer and Parfyonova (2010) refer to as affective and continuance commitment. The perception of these commitment-related outcomes during the WCP is contrary to the literature which depicts that commitment is undermined by initiatives including downsizing (Meyer: 2009; Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler: 2000; Grimmer and Oddy: 2007; Lester *et al*: 2002; Turnley and Feldman: 1999; Robinson: 1995).

In relation to behavioural consequences, the parties perceived that employees demonstrated functional flexibility during the WCP, demonstrated by a willingness to undertake tasks which departed from their job descriptions. There is agreement that employee's job performance was high and crucially included the completion of business critical toxicology studies on time and to the required quality standard. Both flexibility and high in-role job performance are contrary to Zhao *et al* (2007). However, the perception of high in-role job performance during a WCP supports the research evidence which associates a WCP with an unexpected productivity increase known as the closedown effect (Wigblad *et al*: 2012 and 2007; Hansson and Wigblad: 2006; Bergman and Wigblad: 1999). Therefore, the parties perceived that the outcomes of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP were positive. This perception departs from the literature although the findings about high in-role job performance are consistent with research evidence highlighting the possible performance benefits of a closedown effect during a WCP. These findings provide evidence that the outcomes of a PCB cannot be assumed to be negative.

### 8.3.2 Different perspectives on the outcomes of the AgCo PC:

As discussed in relation to Research Objective (2) and (3), AgCo agents perceived a single PC at Tox Lab and had positive evaluations of its state and outcomes due to moderators and justice. In contrast, Tox Lab agents and employees perceived multiple PCs. They had positive evaluations of the state and outcomes of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP but negative perceptions of the state and outcomes of the PC with AgCo. They perceived that they were neglected by AgCo and its agents during the WCP and that this had detrimental implications for the state and outcomes, as reflected in the evaluation that the state and outcomes of the AgCo were negative during the WCP.

The negative outcomes perceived by Tox Lab agents and employees included anger and emotional upset. Employees perceived that they were neglected by AgCo and its agents during the WCP and they were angry and upset about this. Employees reported mistrust towards AgCo and Interviewee 1 and 2 during the WCP. These negative outcomes of anger, upset and mistrust are consistent with

the interpretation of the PCB as a PCV and the depiction in the literature of negative emotional responses arising from PCV (Zhao *et al*: 2007). Employee perceptions of mistrust is consistent with Worrall *et al* (2011) who found that employees mistrusted senior managers when redundancy had been used to implement organisational change. In the case of Tox Lab, employees mistrusted Interviewee 1 and 2 who they identified as agents of the WCD whilst at the same time, perceiving fulfilment of a relational PC at Tox Lab, where a relational PC is underpinned by trust (Guest: 2004). This suggests to me that employees perceived both trust and mistrust. This extends the work of Buckley (2011: 325) who found that Human Resource Managers who survived downsizing spent “some time oscillating between trust and distrust ... The indication is that seemingly contradictory feelings can be maintained at the same time”. My suggestion is that like surviving HR Managers, redundant Tox Lab employees experienced feelings of trust and mistrust simultaneously. Employee’s perception of mistrust in the wake of a PCV is consistent with the literature (Guest and Clinton: 2011; Zhao *et al*: 2007; Deery *et al*: 2006; Robinson and Rousseau: 1994). However, employee’s oscillation between trust and mistrust offers a more complex view of the implications of the WCD for trust than that perceived by AgCo agents and the depiction in the literature.

These negative outcomes of anger, upset and mistrust were associated exclusively with the AgCo PC. Tox Lab agents and employees shared the view of AgCo agents that the outcomes of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP were positive. Therefore, the Tox Lab and employee perspectives suggest that the Tox Lab and AgCo PCs were distinct and the effects of the PCV were contained in the AgCo PC and did not spillover into the Tox Lab PC. This implies that the effects of violation were localised within a distinct PC. This contributes empirical evidence in response to the gap in the literature identified by Marks (2001: 463) when she questions “does violation of one contract have a more generalised negative impact ... or do contracts operate entirely independently?” In my study, the perspectives of the Tox Lab agents and employee’s indicate that the multiple PCs operated independently and that the violation perceived did not have a generalised negative impact across dual PCs but instead was contained within a single PC.

### 8.3.2 Overall evaluations of the outcomes of the PC during the WCP

From the perspective of AgCo agents, the outcomes were straightforward and positive. They perceived that the WCD was interpreted as a PCV but that the potentially detrimental implications for the state and outcomes were modified and averted through substantial investment in justice perceptions during the WCP. Therefore, they perceived that the detrimental implications of a PCV for the PC during a WCP were limited. This positive perspective departs from the literature which suggests that a PCV will have detrimental implications for the state and outcomes of a PC (Conway and Briner, 2009; Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Tietz and Nadin, 2011; Zhao *et al.*: 2007). As I have discussed, the perspectives of the Tox Lab agents and employees is more complex and mixed than that of AgCo agents because they perceived multiple PCs during the WCP and perceived that the PCV have mixed implications across the PCs. However, despite perceiving that the outcomes of the AgCo PC were negative, Tox Lab agents and employees had an overarching positive evaluation of the outcomes of the PC during the WCP. This is surprising and as referred to in relation to the AgCo agents, it departs from the negative depiction in the literature of the outcomes of PCV.

There is agreement between the parties about the role of the norm of reciprocity in explaining the overall positive evaluations. AgCo agents perceived that employees reciprocated the justice during the WCP with positive state and outcomes. This identification of the norm of reciprocity as the explanatory variable is consistent with the literature (Coyle-Shapiro and Shore, 2007). Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that the norm of reciprocity operated across multiple PCs in a more targeted way.

Employees perceived that the organisation invested in justice by over-fulfilment of obligations and a change of leadership. They perceived that they benefitted from these investments in justice through very good and fair treatment during the WCP which they reciprocated with fulfilment of a relational PC, culminating in positive outcomes. In contrast, Tox Lab agents and employees perceived neglect of the AgCo PC during the WCP and reciprocated this neglect by withdrawing into a more transactional PC with negative outcomes. This application of positive and negative

reciprocity norms is consistent with what Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000: 11) refer to as targeted reciprocity whereby “employees targeted their reciprocity towards the source of the fulfilled or unfulfilled obligations”. Employees perceived that AgCo and its agents had not fulfilled their obligations relating to job security and the provision of emotional support and responded with negative reciprocity, whilst employees perceived that Tox Lab and its agent had fulfilled their obligation to care for and support them during the WCP and responded with positive reciprocity. Such targeted reciprocity provides a more nuanced perspective on reciprocity compared with that of the AgCo agents and the literature (Coyle-Shapiro and Shore: 2007).

Despite the operation of the reciprocity dynamic across dual PCs, the Tox Lab agents and employee perspectives suggest that the impact of the reciprocity dynamic on the Tox Lab PC was more important to employees than the impact of the negative reciprocity dynamic on the AgCo PC. In other words, employees were more pre-occupied with the implications of the WCD for the Tox Lab PC than the AgCo PC. This is consistent with Marks (2001: 463) who argues that when “there is more than one psychological contract operating within the organisation ... the strength of this contract is determined by the proximity”. Tox Lab was the proximal PC which had a stronger impact on overall outcomes than the more distal AgCo PC. So whilst employees interpreted the WCD as a PCV and targeted their negative reciprocity towards AgCo and Interviewee 1 and 2, these detrimental implications had less of an impact on employee’s overall assessment of the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP than the favourable implications of the moderators and investment in justice for the Tox Lab PC, due to the rule of proximity. Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that the AgCo and Tox Lab PCs were distinct and that there was no spillover between them which means that the detrimental implications of the PCV were contained within the AgCo PC. This suggests to me that the overall positive evaluations of the outcomes of the PC during the WCP can be explained by broader and more complex explanatory mechanisms. My suggestion is that the reliance in the literature upon the norms of reciprocity as the dominant explanatory mechanism is narrow and inadequate (Coyle-Shapiro and Shore: 2007).

## 8.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the similarities and differences between the perspectives of the parties. I have illustrated the similarity of perspectives between Tox Lab agents and employees and discussed how this differs from the perspective of AgCo agents. I have argued that the AgCo agents had a positive perspective on the implications of a WCD for the PC during a WCP. Whilst they interpreted the WCD as a PCV, they perceived that the detrimental implications of a PCV were modified and limited due to justice perceptions which employees reciprocated with fulfilment of a relational PC, contributing to surprising evaluations of a positive state and outcomes during the WCP. I have argued that the Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that the PCV constructed two distinct PCs during the WCP. Tox Lab agents perceived that these were dual PCs whilst employees perceived a primary PC with Tox Lab and secondary PC with AgCo. Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that the PCV had drastic and detrimental implications for their relationship with AgCo and its agents during the WCP, evident in their perception of a transactional PC and emotional reactions. However, they agreed that the state and outcomes of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP were positive due to moderators and justice perceptions. In addition, Tox Lab agents and employees perceived that the negative effects of PCV were contained within the (secondary) AgCo PC without any spillover into the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP. Employees interpreted the WCD as a PCV but overall, held favourable assessments of the implications of the WCD for the PC during the WCP. Their positive evaluations of the state and outcomes of the PC at Tox Lab during the WCP seem to be surprisingly protected from the negative implications of the PCV. I argue that this can be explained by the rule of proximity which means that their overall assessment is shaped by their proximal PC, which was at Tox Lab and of which they had positive evaluations.

I have discussed how my findings present a more positive and complex perspective on the implications of a PCV for the PC compared with the literature. Contrary to PC theory, my findings suggest that the perception of PCB and PCV does not necessarily mean that the state and the outcomes of the PC will be negative (Conway and Briner: 2009). My proposal is that the positive perspectives in this Tox lab study can be explained by moderators, the perception of multiple PCs and the operation of PCV across multiple PCs. This is represented in Figure 8.1 which is a

framework for analysing the implications of a WCD for the PC, which I have constructed from a comparison of the perspectives discussed within this chapter:

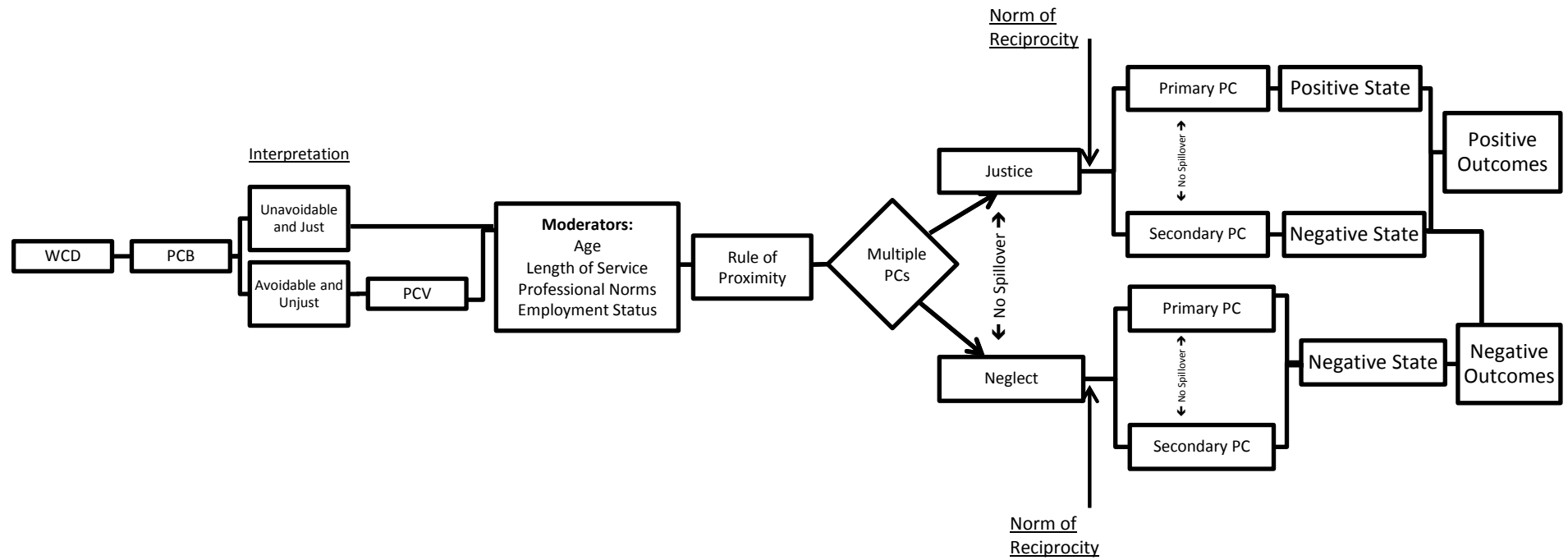


Figure 8.1: A framework for analysing the implications of a WCD for the PC



Figure 8.1 illustrates that the implications of a WCD for the PC are complex due to the possibility of different interpretations, the interactions of moderators and justice perceptions and the operation of PCV across multiple PCs. This departs from the literature by outlining how a PCB will not necessarily have entirely detrimental implications for the state and outcomes of the PC (Datta *et al*, 2010; Tietz and Nadin, 2011; Zhao *et al*, 2007; Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Turnley and Feldman, 1998). It draws upon Guest's (2004) and Marks' (2001) conceptualisations of the PC which is broader than the dominant conceptualisation inspired by Rousseau (1990). It highlights the key role that justice can play in shaping perspectives on a PCB (Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Rousseau and Anton, 1998), both in relation to the interpretation of a PCB and the evaluation of the subsequent state and outcomes of the PC. Finally, it illustrates how PCV can operate across multiple PCs (Marks, 2001), extending the reliance upon the norm of reciprocity as the dominant explanation for the relationship between PCB and outcomes (Coyle-Shapiro and Shore, 2007). As discussed in the next chapter, I propose that Figure 7.1 extends the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 3. In the next chapter, I present my conclusions and discuss my contributions.

## 9.1 Introduction

In this Chapter I start by summarising the conclusions of this research in relation to the Research Aim before highlighting the contributions to knowledge and outlining implications for policy and practice. The limitations of the research are evaluated and the Chapter ends with the presentation of ideas for future research. References to literature are limited to key sources because these are discussed in depth in Chapter 8.

## 9.2 Conclusions

The aim of my research was to understand and explain the implications of a WCD for the PC during a WCP from the perspectives of management and employees. At the outset of the research process, I thought that the detrimental implications were limited which seemed to me to be counter-intuitive and depart from the literature which suggests that the WCD will be interpreted as a PCV with detrimental implications for the state and outcomes of the PC due to the norm of reciprocity. In order to investigate this surprise in depth, I collected data from senior managers and employees in a global organisation in which I used to work as a Human Resources Practitioner. I conducted interviews in order to understand how the parties interpreted the WCD and what they perceived to be the implications of the WCD for the state and outcomes of the PC during a WCP. My key findings are presented in the following section.

My findings are noticeably more complex and more positive than depicted in the literature and summarised at the end of Chapter 3 in Figure 2.4. This suggests to me that the literature over-simplifies the implications of PCV for the PC due a dominant conceptualisation of a single PC at the level of the individual and an assumption that a PCV will have negative consequences for this single PC. My conceptualisation of the PC at the level of the relationship between the parties was particularly interesting in the case of Tox Lab because it highlighted two distinct perspectives. I expected to find a clear management employee perspective but instead, I found that the management perspective was divided between AgCo agents and Tox Lab agents. Interestingly, the perspective of the Tox lab agents was

more similar to the perspective of employees rather than the AgCo agents who were their management colleagues at the start of the WCP. This suggests to me that employment status as a leaver or survivor is more important in shaping perspectives in this study than position within the organisational hierarchy.

As discussed in Chapter 8, the perspective of AgCo agents is more straightforward and more positive compared with the perspectives of Tox Lab agents and employees. This highlights to me the need for caution in interpreting the perspectives of key informants due to their political nature. The findings indicate that all parties perceived that the WCD was a PCB which is consistent with the literature, but that the Tox Lab agents and employees interpreted the PCB as a PCV, whilst the AgCo did not interpret the PCB as a PCV. This supports the conceptual distinction between PCB and PCV (Morrison and Robinson, 1997). However, what was surprising was the positive evaluation of the state and outcomes of the PC in the wake of the PCV. Contrary to the literature, my findings suggest that the development of a PCV is complex and cannot be assumed to operate through entirely negative pathways, particularly where multiple PCs are perceived. Instead, the findings suggest to me that the development of PCV is more complex, particularly across multiple PCs where there seems to be a possibility of localising PCV within a single PC. In the case of Tox Lab, justice perceptions seem to me to underpin the interpretation of a PCB and the evaluation of the state and outcomes of the PC following a PCB / PCV. My conclusion is that the implications of a PCB cannot be assumed to be entirely negative for the PC and instead are complex. This complexity is depicted in my overall contribution which is presented in Figure 9.1 below:

CONTRIBUTION

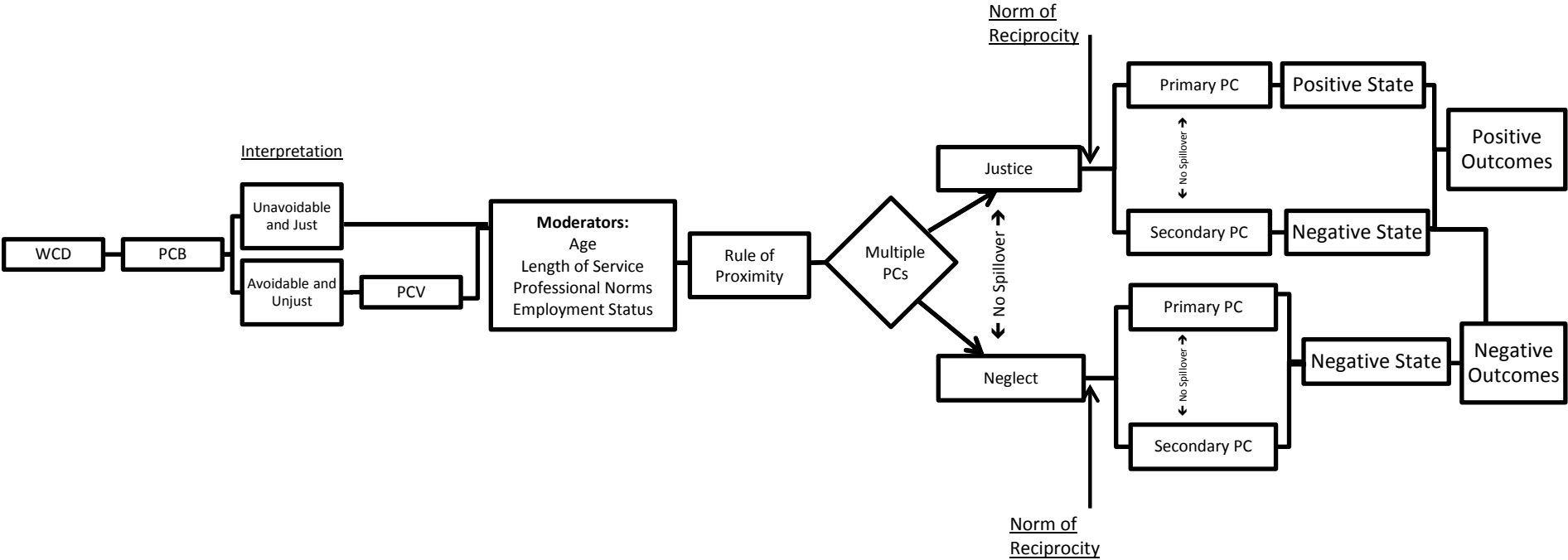


Figure 9.1: A framework for analysing the implications of a PCB for the PC

Figure 9.1 is the overall contribution of this thesis and contributes to PC theory. PC theory depicts the implications of PCB and PCV straightforward and entirely detrimental. However, this view is predominantly constructed from a conceptualisation of a single PC at the level of the individual. I have argued that this conceptualisation is inconsistent with the two-way nature of employment relationships and the potential for multiple PCs to be constructed when a WCD affects a workplace whilst the larger organisation continues. Furthermore, this narrow conceptualisation neglects the role of organisational agents which constructs unnecessary partiality of knowledge. Figure 9.1 contributes a theoretical framework which is constructed from this broader conceptualisation of multiple PCs at the level of the relationships between the organisation and its employees.

Figure 9.1 extends Morrison and Robinson's (1997) model of the development of violation in a single PC from the employee's perspective, to a theoretical framework which integrates the development and possible implications of violation across dual PCs from the perspective of organisational agents and employees.

Figure 9.1 extends the explanatory mechanisms underpinning the PC beyond the confines of the norm of reciprocity. It highlights individual variables which have the potential to modify the state of the PC and it emphasises the key role of justice perceptions in interpretations of a PCB and the state of a PC following perceptions of PCB. It allows for the possibility that reciprocity can be targeted in a positive and negative way, and it highlights the impact of the rule of proximity and the way in which PCV can be contained within a single PC as explanatory factors for perspectives on the state and outcomes of the PC.

### **9.3 Empirical contributions**

In addition to the theoretical contributions outlined above, this Tox Lab study makes the following four empirical contributions. First, it contributes empirical data on the implications of violation across dual PCs. Marks (2001) comments that there is a

lack of empirical evidence on whether violation of one PC permeates another PC. This Tox Lab study contributes empirical evidence which suggests that PCV can occur within one PC independently from other PCs and that violation in one PC will not necessarily permeate another PC. Furthermore, Marks (2001) asserts that where multiple PCs are perceived, the proximal PC has a stronger effect on employee's evaluation of the PC due to the rule of proximity. At Tox Lab, employees perceived dual PCs and the proximal Tox Lab PC had a stronger effect on their overall evaluation of the implications of the WCD for the PC. Therefore, this Tox Lab study contributes empirical evidence on the discrete effects of violation across dual PCs and supports the rule of proximity.

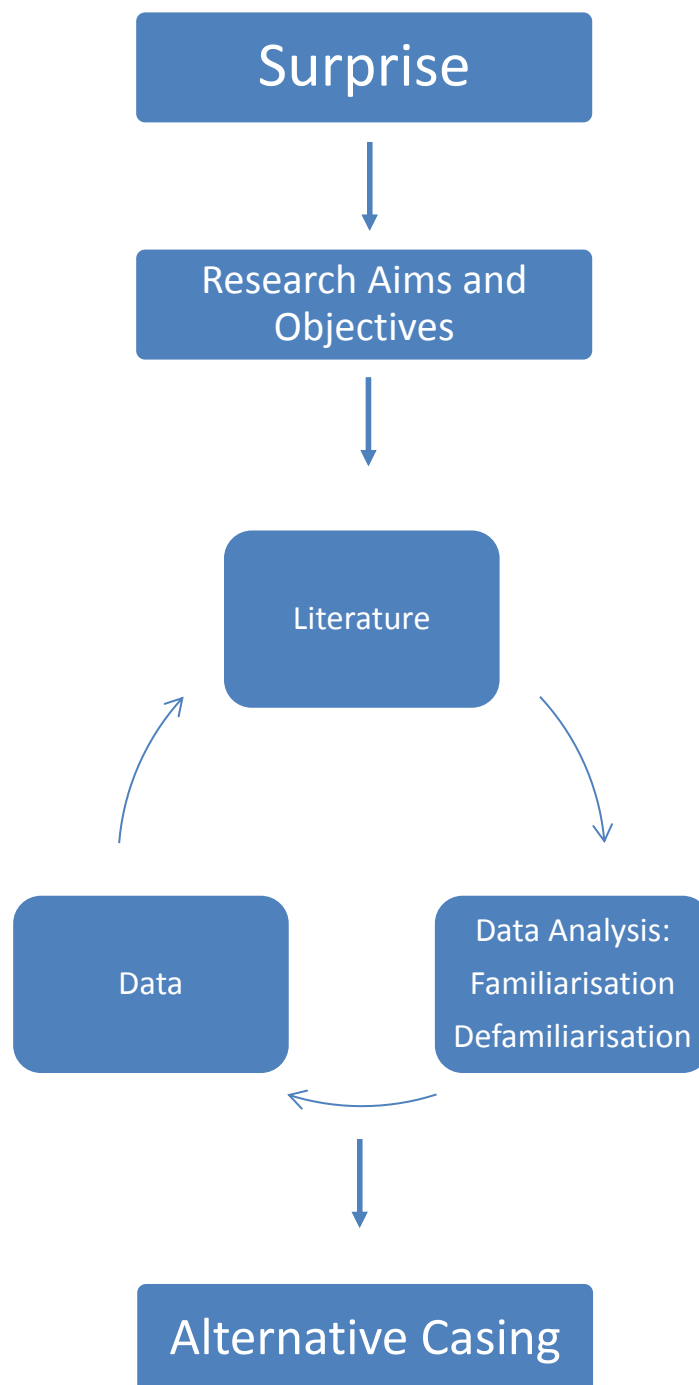
Second, it contributes empirical data on the implications of over-fulfilment of obligations. There is a lack of research on the implications of over-fulfilment compared with the volume of research on PCB and PCV. My study suggests that over-fulfilment can have positive implications for justice perceptions and can thus contribute to positive evaluations of the state of the PC in the wake of a PCV.

Third, it contributes empirical data on the under-researched contexts of WC and animal facility which are under-researched due to access difficulties. Organisations are understandably reluctant to provide researchers with access in the midst of turbulent times such as a WCD. Organisations in the animal research industry have to ensure the safety and security of their employees due to the controversial nature of their work and so they have to be very cautious about providing organisational access to people who are not known to them.

Fourth, it contributes insights from the perspectives of key informants and leavers. These perspectives are under-researched in comparison with the dominant survivor perspective due to access difficulties. Therefore, this thesis contributes rare empirical data on interesting and controversial contexts.

## 9.4 Methodological contribution

This Tox Lab study has two main methodological contributions. First, as discussed in Chapter 4, PC research is dominated by quantitative surveys and has been criticised for being stuck in a methodological rut of quantitative surveys (Conway and Briner: 2009; Taylor and Tekleab: 2004). With its design around a surprise, this Tox Lab study responds to calls for more qualitative research and contributes a methodological framework which is presented in Figure 9.2 and is designed to understand and explain surprising empirical phenomena:



### **Figure 9.2: Methodological framework for investigating surprising phenomena**

In the case of Tox Lab, the research was triggered by my surprise about the limited detrimental implications of the WCD for the PC which departed from PC theory. The Aim of the research was to understand and explain this surprising phenomenon and a problematizing approach was adopted to the construction of the Research Objectives in order to challenge the assumptions of PC theory. In order to understand and explain the surprise, the researcher adopted an abductive approach in moving backwards and forwards between the data, literature and analysis in order to construct an alternative casing which was that the implications of the WCD for the PC were unpredictable which departs from conventional PC theory which depicts the implications as entirely detrimental.

Second, this Tox Lab study illustrates a localist perspective on the research interview. This departs from the dominant positivist and romantic perspectives and contributes a more critical view of the qualitative research interview. It illustrates the importance of situating the accounts from organisational agents and employees within their political contexts in order to enhance understanding of their perspectives on the implications of a WCD for the PC.

### **9.4 Implications for policy and practice:**

This thesis is an in-depth case study of the implications of a WCD for the PC at Tox Lab. The findings are primarily relevant for AgCo. They are not intended to be generalizable across organisational contexts. Consistent with the localist perspective on research interviews, the findings are not regarded as a definitive account of the implications of a WCD for the PC. However, it is proposed that the findings from this case study illustrate some good policies and practices that might be relevant for AgCo to consider in the event of subsequent WCDs. Moreover, it is suggested that the policies and procedures adopted in this study, might be relevant to other organisations who are faced with conducting a WCP with high risks, perhaps because of their industries (for example, nuclear industry).



The key implication for policy and practice arising from my thesis is the merits of investing in justice perceptions. In my thesis, justice perceptions were important in shaping interpretations of a PCB and then the subsequent state and outcomes of a PC in the wake of a PCV. Justice was derived from an over-fulfilment of obligations by the organisation and by leadership. This implies to me that HRM policies which are perceived to be generous and supportive and enacted by an empathetic leader can contribute to positive evaluations of the state and outcomes of the PC. Moreover, this Tox Lab study illustrates how a SR-approach to a WCP can have benefits for both the organisation and its employees.

However, it is recognised that it may not be necessary or financially feasible or desirable for organisations to invest in the PC to the same level as AgCo. Moreover, the employee's perspective at Tox Lab suggests the perception of dual PCs which might enable a more strategic approach to support policies and practices during a WCP. Where employees perceive multiple PCs, it is proposed that organisations consider investing in the proximal PC because the Tox Lab study suggests that the proximal study has the strongest impact on employee's overall evaluation of the PC. At Tox Lab, there was a business rationale for investment in the proximal PC due to the risk of adverse publicity due to the conduct of animal research. Furthermore, where possible, organisations may seek to contain any anticipated negative implications of a PCV in the distal PC.

In the next section, the limitations of the research are discussed.

## **9.5 Limitations of the research**

As discussed in Chapter 4, this research has been carefully designed around a surprise. Whilst all reasonable efforts have been taken to ensure the quality of the content, it is recognised that the research design is subject to three main limitations.

First, the research design is cross sectional. The majority of data collection was undertaken between April and June 2010. This was the final stages of the WCP and

over three years after the announcement of the WCD. Whilst the research interviews invited participants to reflect on their perceptions of the WCP in its entirety, it is acknowledged that there is a mismatch between such longitudinal reflections and the cross sectional research design. Inevitably there are gaps within the interview accounts where participants were unable to remember specific details, perceptions or feelings. This highlights the importance of situating interview accounts within their contexts at the time of data collection in 2010 and interpreting reflections on the WCD in 2006 from within this context rather than regarding such reflections as mirroring reality as it was three years previously.

Second, there are limitations regarding the composition and homogenous nature of the sample. The sample comprised mature workers with long service who were highly educated and paid. As discussed in Chapter 4, these variables were key inputs into the state and outcomes of the PC and have explanatory power in relation to the surprisingly limited detrimental implications of the WCD for the PC. However, a sample which included younger workers with shorter service, less education and on a lower salary might have contributed different perspectives on the implications of the WCD for the PC. Whilst there was no imperative for the sample to be representative of the population of Tox Lab, it was noted that the characteristics of the sample were typical of the broader population and therefore it was difficult to broaden the characteristics of the sample.

Third, the perspectives of organisational agents were investigated from their roles as agents of the WCD and the PC. However, it is acknowledged that organisational agents were also employees, yet this perspective was not investigated in this thesis. In the case of Tox Lab, Interviewees 1 and 2 were the only organisational agents who were not facing compulsory redundancy due to the WCD. However, it was beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate their perspectives as employees. Moreover, the perspectives of organisational agents are neglected in PC research compared with those of employees and therefore this perspective was prioritised.

## 9.6 Ideas for further research

Whilst this thesis has made valuable contributions, three main ideas for further research are identified. First, the cross sectional research design was inconsistent with the processual nature of the WC at Tox Lab and the PC. Therefore, it would be preferable to adopt a longitudinal research design in order to gain insights into perceptions of the implications of a WCD for the PC at certain key time points. For example, immediately after the announcement of a WCD, three months later and just before an employee leaves the organisation. This is however, contingent on gaining regular access to organisations on a long-term basis including during turbulent periods which may be problematic. This is perhaps where the use of more innovative data collection methods might be helpful. For example, participants could be asked to use online research methods such as blogs, in order to reflect on an ad hoc, informal and frequent basis on their experiences of a WCP. This is an emerging contemporary data collection method (Harricharan and Bhopal, 2014) which could merit exploration for further research.

Whilst the research interview is the dominant data collection method in qualitative research and may be particularly suited to the emotional nature of WC, it does not necessarily enable real time reflections at key time points. It would be interesting to explore how web-enabled technology for data collection might enable (longitudinal) access difficulties to be overcome. For example, participants could be asked to post regular blogs on their perceptions of the implications of the WCD for the PC at specified time points during the WCP. The researcher could support these blogs through the provision of guidance on the content of blogs akin to a semi-structured interview guide and then follow up blogs with emails and phone calls where appropriate in order to seek clarification and elaborate on particularly interesting posts.

Second, this thesis is designed around a single case study which illustrates some exemplar policies and practices in the particular context of an animal research facility. It would be interesting to increase the design to multiple case studies, perhaps in the first instance drawing upon a workplace within AgCo which affected by a WCD before investigating additional case studies outside of AgCo in order to

compare policies and practices. Whilst Tox Lab can be regarded as an exemplar case where the implications of the WCD for the PC at Tox Lab were surprisingly detrimental, it would be interesting to compare with a case where the implications of the WCD for the PC were more detrimental, in order to understand and explain these different findings. Similarly, it would be interesting to compare the Tox Lab case with a WCP outside of the animal research context. This would be subject to gaining organisational access.

Third, whilst the perspectives of organisational agents is neglected within the literature, it is recognised that they held multiple roles at Tox Lab as agents of a WCD and PC but also some were employees affected by the WCD. It is plausible that there would be tensions between these different roles as organisational agents may perceive obligations to support subordinates in coping with a WCD whilst simultaneously perceiving a need for support with their own coping mechanisms. It would be interesting to explore these tensions in more depth in subsequent research. This could be through an exclusive focus on the perspective of organisational agents in their multiple roles as agents of the WCD and PC and as employees.

## **9.7 Chapter summary**

This Chapter has concluded that PC theory over-simplifies the implications of PCV. By conceptualising multiple PCs at the level of the relationship between the organisation and its employees, this thesis has found that the implications of a WCD for the PC are unpredictable, contingent upon a range of variables and embedded within contexts. Notwithstanding the limitations of the research, this thesis makes a number of contributions to knowledge and has key implications for policy and practice within AgCo in particular. Although it provides an in-depth understanding of the implications of a WCD for the PC at Tox Lab, there are a number of ways in which this research could be developed further through different contexts, perspectives and data collection methods in order to continue to contribute further to this under-researched area.

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Interviewee Number	Date of interview	Location of interview	Type of interview	Interview duration	Age range	Length of service	Role	Qualification level	Exit date	Career move after CTL
1	10/09/2010	n/a	Phone	1hr33	60+	35 years	Site Director / Global Manager	PhD	30/04/2010	Semi-retired & consultancy
2	29/05/2010	Pavillion Gardens	Face to face	1hr5	50-60	30+ years (ongoing)	Global Scientific Manager	PhD	N/A	AgCo South
3	24/09/2010	n/a	Phone	c1hr		22 years	Commercial Manager	PhD	30/04/2010	Consultancy
4	21/04/2010	Site X	Face to face	c2hr45	50+	12 years	Dept head & CTL Director	Professional qual	30/04/2010	Job searching
5	14/04/2010	DTL	Face to face	55mins	50-60	28 years	Head of Department	PhD	31/03/2008	Set up DTL (Scientific Co)
6	12/05/2010	Site Z	Face to face	c1hr	40-50	25+ years	HR Business Partner	Professional qual	N/A	
7	28/04/2010	Office	Face to face	c1hr	40-50	21 years	Work Group Leader	Graduate	30/09/2009	Nutritionist - new business
8	15/04/2010	Site X Pavillion Gardens	Face to face		60+	25+ years	HS&E Advisor & TU rep	Professional qual	31/03/2009	Retired
9	08/07/2010		Face to face	1hr5	50+	37 years	Senior Toxicologist			Consultant for Company
10	06/09/2010	n/a	Phone	1hr	50+	23+ years (ongoing)	Senior Toxicologist	PhD	Still working at Co	Bigger role
11	13/04/2010	Site X	Face to face	1hr20	50-60	15-25 years	Senior Scientist	PhD	31/12/2008	Consultancy with RSA
12	28/04/2010	Site X	Face to face	1hr10	50-60	32 years	Scientific Group Leader	Professional qual	31/03/2009	Retired
13	28/4/2010	n/a	Phone	1hr45	40-50	21 years	Animal Facility Manager	Professional qual	30/04/2010	Technician role
14	31/03/2010	Site X	Face to face	40 mins	25-40	12 years	Administrator	Professional qual	30/04/2010	Job searching
15	13/04/2010	Site X	Face to face	c1hr20	40-50	25+ years	Scientist	Graduate	31/08/2009	Consultancy with RSA
16	13/04/2010	Site X	Face to face	55mins	50-60	15-25 years	Senior Scientist	PhD	31/12/2008	Consultancy with RSA
17	07/05/2010	Office	Face to face	1hr5	40-50	24 years	IT Manager	Professional qual	28/02/2010	IT role in solicitors
18	15/04/2010	Site X	Face to face		50-60	10-15 years	Administrator Team Leader & Staff rep	Professional qual	30/04/2010	Job searching
19	25/04/2010	Office	Face to face	1hr35	40-50	15-25 years	Chair	Professional qual	31/07/2008	Sci Co (2 career moves)
20	31/03/2010	Site X	Face to face	40 mins	40-50	25+ years	Admin Team Leader	Professional qual	30/04/2010	Job searching
21	31/03/2010	Site X	Face to face	45 mins	40-50		Administrator	Professional qual	31/03/2009	School administrator
22	22/09/2010	Office	Face to face	c1hr	50+	25+ years	Technical Specialist	Professional qual		Retired
23	06/05/2010	n/a	Phone	c1hr		n/a	Redeployment consultant	PhD	n/a	n/a
24	31/03/2010	Site X	Face to face	c1hr10	50-60	n/a	Redeployment consultant		n/a	n/a
25	26/04/2010	n/a	Phone	50mins	50+	n/a	Redeployment consultant		n/a	n/a
26	26/04/2010	n/a	Phone	55mins	50+	n/a	Redeployment consultant		N/A	n/a

## Appendix A2: Descriptive Statistics - All Sample

All Sample	Average Age (yrs)	Average Annual Salary	Length of Service (yrs)
M = 13	M = 56.04	M = £55,873	M = 27.4 yrs
F = 14	F = 50.4	F = £38,383	F = 19.2 yrs
N = 27	All = 53.2  N = 24	All = £47,128	All = 23.7 yrs

**Notes:** i)  
N=total  
numbers of

observations for each column. All is average for all males and females.

ii) Age data presented in bands –eg 40-50: hence age calculated on basis of average for each band. For example, for range 40-50, average is 45 which was used in calculating age data for Table 1.

iii) Length of service: where a range was shown it was assumed that length of service was the average of the range. For example, length of service of 10-15 yrs was estimated to be 12.5 yrs; also 25+ yrs was assumed to be 25 yrs.

iv) There were some missing observations for some data.

### Table 2. PhD Salaries

Annual Average Salary with PhD: **£69,493**

Average annual salary for all others

(Professional and Graduates): **£39,312**

### Rank correlations

A Spearmans rank correlation was estimated between annual salary and length of service. A positive relationship was expected. The expected positive relationship was estimated with a rank correlation coefficient of +0.22 but this was not significant at the 5% level.

Rank correlations for age and salary were not estimated due to the lack of actual age data: data were only available for age bands.

**Source: Ellis, C. Quantitative Research Methods Assignment, 2011.**

## **Appendix A3: Interview Guide**

### Section 1: Background and context

1. Can you tell me about the work you were doing with Tox Lab before the announcement?

Technical	Admin	Business support	Other

2. In what capacity were you working?

Employee	Manager	Agency temp	Consultant	Other

3. What were your experiences of AgCo and Tox Lab before the announcement? What sort of a place was it to work? How would you describe AgCo and Tox Lab as an employer?

Great	Good	Negative	Other

### Section 2: Decision to close Tox Lab

1. What is your understanding of the reasons for closing Tox Lab?

Detailed understanding	Some understanding	Not sure	Don't know	Other

--	--	--	--	--

2. What was your reaction to the decision?

Shock	Surprise	Inevitable	Other

3. What were your observations of other people's reactions to the decision?

Variety of reactions	Similarity of reactions	Other

### Section 3: Approach to closure

1. What was your role in the closure?

Employee	Manager	Representative	Temp	Consultant	Other

2. How did you expect the closure to be handled and why?

Well	Badly	No expectations

3. How would you describe the approach to closing the site?

Supportive	Ruthless	People-centred	Business-focused	Indifferent

4. Who do you regard as having devised the approach?

AgCo	Tox Lab	Management	Joint	Other

5. What do you see as the intention behind the approach to closure?

Retention	Engagement	Motivation	Good PR	Reduce guilt	Other



6. How would you score the approach to closure e.g. marks out of 10 (10 is excellent)

#### Section 4: Individual experiences of site closure

1. How would you describe your actual experiences of site closure?

Positive	Negative

2. How does this compare with your original expectations?

Better than expected	As expected	Disappointed	Other

3. How do you think you were treated?

Very well	Well	Badly

4. What was your :
  - a. Best
  - b. Worst
  - c. Most surprising

Experience of the closure period?

5. Based on your experiences, what suggestions and recommendations would you give for future site closures?
6. What could have been done better?

## Section 5: Reflections

1. How and to what extent have you reflected on your experiences of site closure?
2. What has it been like staying until the end?
3. How and to what extent has your view of AgCo and Tox Lab as an employer changed?

4. How and to what extent did your views on initiatives such as Frameworks and engagement change after the announcement?

5. What have you learnt from the process?

6. How does it compare with any redundancy experiences you've had previously or subsequently?

What have you been doing since you left AgCo or do you plan to do after you leave?

Are there any other points about the site closure that you would like to highlight?

## Appendix A4: A priori themes and preliminary coding (Stage 1 of the data analysis process)

### Codes:

1. Role of / relationship with animals
2. SR / non-SR approach to WC
3. PC content:
  - a. Relational
  - b. Transactional
  - c. Balanced
  - d. Transitional
4. Evaluation of the PC:
  - a. PCB / PCV / PCF
  - b. Trust
  - c. Fairness

### Industrial Toxicology context

- **Secrecy:** Did EEs / mgrs perceive an obligation to be secretive about their work?
- **Boundaries:** Did EEs / mgrs construct boundaries between their work and their outside life?
- **Occupational stigma:** Did EEs / mgrs perceive that they were working in a stigmatized occupation?
- **Dirty work:** Did EEs / mgrs perceive that their work as undesirable?
- **Justification:** Did EEs / mgrs perceive an obligation to construct narratives to justify their work?
- **Well-being:** Did EEs / mgrs perceive any particular obligations towards well-being given the controversial, physical and emotionally demanding nature of the work?
- **Animal welfare:** Did EEs / mgrs perceive any particular obligations towards care and welfare of lab animals?
- **Legal regulation:** Did EEs/ mgrs perceive that the IT context was highly regulated?

- **Relationship with animals:** Did Ees / mgrs perceive lab animals as a source of fulfilment / attachment?

### **WC context**

- **Reason for WC decision:** What did EEs / mgrs perceive to be the reason for closing Tox Lab?
- **Reaction to the WC decision:** How did EEs / mgrs react to the decision to close Tox Lab?
- **WC approach:** How did EEs / mgrs perceive the WC approach (e.g. SR or non-SR)?
- **WC deal:** What did EEs / mgrs perceive to be the key features of the WC deal?
- **Reactions to the WC deal:** How did EEs / mgrs react to the content of the WC deal?
- **Management objectives:** What did managers perceive to be the key objectives of the WC process?
- **EE objectives:** What did EEs perceive to be the key objectives of the WC process?
- **Close-down effect:** Did EEs / mgrs perceive any productivity changes during the WC process?
- **Frontiers of control:** Did EEs / mgrs perceive any shift in the frontiers of control (or the balance of power) during the WC process?
- **Conceptualisation of WC process:** How did EEs / mgr conceptualise the WC process (e.g. like a bereavement)?
- **Coping mechanisms:** How did EEs cope with the WC process (e.g. stage grief models – letting go and moving on – or maintaining bonds)?
- **Support mechanisms:** What support mechanisms did the organisation provide for EEs during the WC process?
- **Evaluation of support mechanisms:** How did EEs / mgrs evaluate the effectiveness of the support mechanisms?
- **Perceptions of redundancy:** How did EEs / mgrs perceive redundancy (e.g. as unfavourable / detrimental implications)?

### **PC construct**

- **Level of conceptualisation:** Do EEs / mgrs perceive the PC as a one or two way exchange?

- **Parties to the PC:** Who did EEs / mgrs perceive that their PC was with / who or what did they feel obliged towards (e.g. Ag Co / Tox Lab / their profession / colleagues / animals)?
- **Construction of the deal:** What did EEs / mgrs perceive that the deal is constructed from (e.g. promises , obligations and / or expectations or not really distinguish)?

## **The content of the PC**

### **1a) Nature of the deal**

- **Transactional or relational:**
  - **Time frame:** ST, time bound (transactional) v LT, open ended (relational)
  - **Specificity:** Highly specific exchange (transactional) v loosely specified (relational)
  - **Explicitness:** Explicit promises (transactional) v Implicit (relational)
  - **Negotiation:** Explicit with formal agreement (transactional) v implicit without formal agreement (relational)
- **Transactional PC:**
  - Minimum stay
  - Advancement
  - High pay
  - Merit pay
- **Relational PC:**
  - Overtime
  - Loyalty
  - Extra role behaviour
  - Training
  - Job security
  - Development
  - Support
- **Transitional PC:**
  - Short term
  - Ambiguity / uncertainty
  - Mistrust
  - Erosion
- **Balanced PCs:**
  - Long-term

- High member commitment
- High integration / identification
- Ongoing development
- Mutual support
- Dynamic

### **1b) Delivery of the deal**

- **Overall perceptions of delivery of the deal:** Did EEs / mgrs perceive that each party had delivered on their promises, obligations etc?
- **Delivery on specific components of the deal:** Did EEs / mgrs perceive delivery in relation to:
  - **Job security**
  - **Career development opportunities**
  - **Benefits**
  - **Responsibility and power**
  - **Voice**
  - **Reward and recognition**
  - **Organisational support**
  - **Job challenge and excitement**
  - **Training**
- **Mitigating factors:** Did EEs / mgrs perceive any of the following to mitigate the perceptions of the delivery of the deal
  - **WC deal**
  - **Voice mechanisms**
  - **Advance notice**
  - **Mentors and supervisors**

### **2) Fairness**

- **Fairness of WC decision:** How fair did Ees / mgrs perceive the decision to close Tox Lab? (distributive justice)
- **Fairness of WC approach:** How fair did EEs / mgrs perceive the WC approach? (procedural justice)
- **Fairness of treatment:** Did Ees / mgrs perceive the WC deal as evidence of fair treatment during the WC process? (interactional justice)
- **Factors promoting fairness:** Did EEs / mgrs perceive any of the following factors which are regarded as promoting perceptions of procedural justice:
  - **EE voice mechanisms**
  - **Single WC closure deal**

- **Flexibility in the implementation of the deal**
- **Ethical approach to implementation of the deal**

### **3) Trust**

- **Levels of trust:** Did EEs / mgrs perceive that there was trust between the parties?  
Or that it had been breached and / or violated?
- **Types of trust:** If trust was perceived between the parties then did EEs / managers perceive a particular type of trust? (e.g. cognitive or affective)
- **Sources of trust:** Who did EEs trust e.g. Agco (org trust) and / or their manager (interpersonal trust)?
- **Obligation to trust:** Did EEs perceive an obligation to trust the organisation and / or their managers?
- **Drivers of trust:** What factors did EEs / mgrs perceive as contributing to any perceptions of trust?
  - Did EEs / mgrs perceive that the organisation was committed to career development and EE well being?
  - Did EEs perceive that they were treated with dignity and respect?
  - Did EEs perceive that the organisation had a clear sense of direction?
  - Did EEs perceive that HRM policies and practices were trust-building or trust eroding?
- **Trust repair:** If EEs / mgrs perceived that trust had been breached or violated, then did they perceive that it could be restored? If so, how? How effective were any attempts to restore trust?



## Appendix 5: Initial template

1. Interviewee background context
  - i) Employment history with AgCo
  - ii) Perceptions of pre-announcement employment relationship
2. Interpretations of redundancy decision
  - i) Interpretations of rationale
  - ii) Reactions to announcement:
    - a. Personal reactions
    - b. Observations of other reactions
3. Perceptions of the redundancy process
  - i) Role in the process
  - ii) Expectations of the process
  - iii) Perceptions of treatment during the process
  - iv) Perceptions of responsibility for designing the process
  - v) Perceptions of intentions behind the process
  - vi) Evaluation of the process
4. Experiences of the redundancy process
  - i) Comparison of experiences with expectations
  - ii) Interpretations of personal implications of the process on:
    - a. Employment relationships;
    - b. Behaviours; and
    - c. Performance outcomes.
  - iii) Interpretations of organisational implications of the process on:
    - a. Employment relationships;
    - b. Behaviour; and
    - c. Performance outcomes
5. Interpretations of the redundancy process
  - i) Changes in perceptions of Ag Co and Tox Lab?
  - ii) Interpretations of pre-announcement HRM performance initiatives

- iii) Lessons from the process
- iv) Recommendations for policy and practice
- v) Comparison with other redundancy experiences

## **Appendix A6: Revised template (following analysis of management perspectives)**

1. Inputs into the state of the PC:
  - Organisational
  - HRM policies and procedures
  - Individual variables
  
2. Evaluation of the state of the PC during the WCP:
  - Type of PC:
    - Relational
    - Transactional
  
  - Obligations during the WCP:
    - Organisational
    - Employee
  
  - Fulfilment of obligations during the WCP:
    - Organisational fulfilment
    - Employee fulfilment
  
3. Outcomes of the state of the PC during the WCP:
  - Positive consequences:
    - Positive attitudes
    - Positive behaviours
  
  - Negative consequences:
    - Negative attitudes
    - Negative behaviours
  
4. Mitigating factors:
  - Attribution of violation
  - Interpersonal justice perceptions
  
5. Contextual Inputs into the state of the PC:
  - Organisational

- HRM policies and procedures
  - Individual variables
6. Evaluation of the state of the PC during the WCP:
- Type of PC:
    - Relational
    - Transactional
  - Obligations during the WCP:
    - Organisational
    - Employee
  - Fulfilment of obligations during the WCP:
    - Organisational fulfilment
    - Employee fulfilment
7. Outcomes of the state of the PC during the WCP:
- Positive consequences:
    - Positive attitudes
    - Positive behaviours
  - Negative consequences:
    - Negative attitudes
    - Negative behaviours
8. Mitigating factors:
- Attribution of violation
  - Interpersonal justice perceptions

## **Appendix A7: Final template**

1. Interpretation of the WCD:
  - a. PCB
  - b. PCB and PCV
  
2. State of the PC during the WCP:
  - a. Single or dual
  - b. Type e.g. relational or transactional
  - c. Fulfilment of obligations by both parties
  
3. Outcomes of the PC during the WCP:
  - a. Positive consequences
  - b. Negative consequences
  - c. Positive and negative
  
4. Explanatory factors:
  - a. Context e.g. animal facility, workplace closure
  - b. Individual characteristics e.g. age, tenure, professional background
  - c. HRM policy framework

